



# A HISTORY OF METHODISM:

COMPRISING

*A VIEW OF THE RISE OF THIS REVIVAL OF SPIRITUAL RELIGION  
IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, AND  
OF THE PRINCIPAL AGENTS BY WHOM IT WAS  
PROMOTED IN EUROPE AND AMERICA;*

WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF

The Doctrine and Polity of Episcopal Methodism  
in the United States, and the Means and Manner of its Extension  
Down to A.D. 1884.

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BY

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No Societies were planted by him, but something was gained to the cause by a survey of the land, and by the people seeing and hearing a good Methodist preacher. Norfolk had much labor bestowed upon it before it took the rank it has long held as a moral city. Asbury found there a hard place, as had Pilmoor, and Williams, and Watters, and Wright, and King, before him. Pilmoor, passing through Portsmouth on his return from the South, came upon two men at the ferry, swearing horribly. He raised his hands, and exclaimed: "Well! if I had been brought to this place blindfolded, I should have known I was near Norfolk."

His preaching excited the opposition of the easy-going parish clergy of the city, and during his absence the parson attempted to turn the tide of feeling against the Methodists by preaching on, "Be not righteous overmuch." He assured the people that he knew from experience the evil of being overrighteous. To his surprise and that of his friends, Pilmoor returned a few days after, and gave notice that he would preach on the verse next following the parson's text, "Be not overmuch wicked." The people crowded to the preaching-place. Having read the text, he said he had been informed that a certain divine of that town had given them a solemn caution against being righteous overmuch. Then lifting his hands, and with a very significant countenance, he exclaimed, "And in *Norfolk* he hath given this caution!"

In October, 1772, by appointment, Asbury became chief or General Assistant, having the direction of affairs and the appointing of the preachers, subject to Wesley's supervision. Boardman quietly fell into a subordinate position, and the itinerancy was really inaugurated. Asbury formed a circuit around Philadelphia, as he had done around New York, taking in Chester and Wilmington, and sweeping into New Jersey. He wrote to Williams, on hearing one of his stirring reports: "I hope that before long about seven preachers of us will spread over seven or eight hundred miles."

Upon his new appointment, Asbury moved his head-quarters to the center of operations—Baltimore; he "settled" the Society into classes, and thus got for the members the benefit of closer oversight and of better spiritual edification. Not content with preaching at the market-place and in private houses, he moved for the building of two churches—Fell's Point and Light Street



## CHAPTER XX.

The Opening in the Colonies—Intolerance in Virginia—Patrick Henry on the Parsons—Tobacco—Whitefield's Sixth Visit—Strawbridge—The First Society and First Methodist Meeting-house in America—Orphan-house—The Founder's Comfort—Whitefield's Last Visit; his Death; his Will—*Exeunt Omnes*.

THE current of emigration, set in motion by revolutions and persecutions in the Old World during the seventeenth century, distributed along the shores of the New very different populations. New England received earnest Puritans; New York, Dutch Reformers; Pennsylvania and New Jersey, Presbyterians and Quakers; the equal laws of Maryland invited a generous population of different creeds; the Carolinas were enriched by Palatines and Huguenots; but Virginia was stinted to an accession of bigoted Churchmen, who neither preached the gospel themselves nor allowed others to preach it. Numbers of cavaliers and loyal gentry flocked to the ancient Dominion, where toasts to the health of Charles II. were drank long before the Restoration, and where the Act of Toleration was not accepted for fifty years after William and Mary had been crowned.

Whitefield's gown gave him a passport through Virginia, except, possibly, in a few places; Devereux Jarratt was another Grimshaw, and that scholarly and Christian man, Dr. Blair, a Scotchman by birth, was for half a century the commissary. Doubtless there were other and similar mitigations of the moral influence which the execrable State-church system was calculated to produce. A high authority says: "If we turn from the clergy to the laity, facts present themselves such as might naturally be supposed to exist under the ministrations of such a clergy. Indeed, it scarce admits of a doubt that between the two classes there was a mutual action and reaction for evil; each probably contributed to make the other worse." \*

We have seen how the Methodists and Moravians were warned off before they came in sight, and with what difficulty the Presbyterians got a footing in the colony. The Baptists bore the brunt of persecution. "They were beaten and imprisoned," says

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\*Hawks's Narrative of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

Dr. Hawks, the historian of his Church, "and cruelty taxed its ingenuity to devise new methods of punishment and annoyance." But they stood it nobly. John Bunyan and Bedford jail were before them, not to speak of a higher inspiration. They marched to prison, singing as they went "Broad is the road that leads to death," and preached to crowds through the prison-bars.

About 1763, the covetousness and arrogance of the exclusive claimants of "apostolic succession" in Virginia Colony received a final blow from a quarter which themselves had invoked. A parson's regular salary, besides house and glebe, was sixteen thousand pounds of tobacco. The crop of 1755 being short, the legislature passed an "act to enable the inhabitants of the colony to discharge tobacco debts in money," at the rate of sixteen shillings and eight pence per hundred weight—at the option of the debtor. Planters who had tobacco to sell got fifty or sixty shillings per hundred weight, and paid the parson at the rate of sixteen shillings and eight pence. This act applied to all other tobacco creditors as well as to ministers. Two years later, the crop again failing, the law was reënacted. The clergy appealed to the home government, and by the Bishop of London their complaints were brought before the king and council; and His Majesty denounced the law, and pronounced it null and void. Sustained by this declaration, the clergy sued to recover their stipends in tobacco; and the test case was brought in the county of Hanover.

The case stood thus: Plaintiff (the clergy) claimed upon the old law, which gave sixteen thousand pounds of tobacco; defendant (the people) pleaded the act of 1757. To this plea plaintiff demurred that said act had been declared, by the king in council, null and void. The court sustained the demurrer, and this was in effect a decision of the cause for the clergy. It only remained to inquire, by a jury, into the amount of damages which the plaintiff had sustained, and to render judgment. The counsel of defendant looked upon the result as inevitable, candidly said so to his client, and retired from the cause. In this desperate stage of the matter, Patrick Henry was employed by defendant. It was his first case. Leaving law pretty much out of view, he played skillfully on the passions and prejudices of the jury, excoriated the lazy and greedy parsons, and poured torrents of eloquent denunciation upon the royal decision as indicating a wanton disregard of the true interests of a suffering people, and

a heartless contempt of their necessities. Waxing bolder, he declared that the king who disallowed and annulled laws of a salutary nature instead of being the father, degenerated into the tyrant of his people. The opposing counsel cried out, "He has spoken treason!" The bench, however, did not think so, and the advocate of the people proceeded without interruption in the delivery of a philippic that made royally inclined ears to tingle. The jury, carried away by such extraordinary eloquence, returned a verdict for plaintiff of *one penny damages*. The court, influenced as much as the jury by the fascinating power of the advocate, unanimously refused to grant a new trial; and this refusal, like the verdict, was received with shouts of acclamation by the crowd within and without the house. In spite of all efforts of officers to preserve order in court, the people seized Mr. Henry at the bar, raised him on their shoulders, and carried him in a triumphal procession about the court-yard.

The Establishment went to pieces after that, though not all at once. Its power of using the civil magistrate to vex and hinder others survived, in some localities, its loss of public respect; so that in a letter written in 1774, Madison, then a young man, thus refers to the condition of things in his vicinity:

Pride, ignorance, and knavery prevail among the priesthood, and vice and wickedness among the laity. This is bad enough; but it is not the worst I have to tell you. That diabolical, hell-conceived principle of persecution rages among some; and to their eternal infamy, the clergy furnish their quota of imps for such purposes. There are at this time in the adjacent county not less than five or six well-meaning men in close jail for publishing their religious sentiments, which, in the main, are very orthodox.

Dissenters increased so rapidly that at the breaking out of the Revolution they were estimated at two-thirds of the population. The Methodists came in and began their work. In 1785 Jefferson's Bill for Religious Freedom became law. In 1801 an order was passed for the sale of all the glebes by the overseers of the poor as soon as vacated by existing incumbents, except those made as private donations subsequent to 1777. Thus were cumberers of the ground cleared away, and a noble soil was prepared for a better growth.

On his sixth visit to America, Whitefield reached Virginia the same year Patrick Henry dealt the effective blow for disestablishment. Whether the two orators, whose eloquence was serving the cause of Christianity from different directions, ever met,

we have no information. Asthma and other ailments were oppressing the great preacher. One physician prescribed a *perpetual blister*. "But I have found," said he, "*perpetual preaching* to be a better remedy. When this great catholicon fails, it is over with me."

To escape the summer heat, he passed on to the North, and seems to have spent the winter there, amidst the scenes of his former gospel-ranging. Next year, as he made his way to Georgia, if he had turned aside a little to the right from his usual track through Maryland, he might have heard the sound of axes and the felling and hewing of trees. The Methodists were building their first meeting-house in America. The people who were destined so largely to cultivate the Western Continent began their "clearing" in 1764, in the woods of Frederick (now Carroll) county, Maryland, thirty miles north-west of Baltimore.

Robert Strawbridge was born at Drumsna, county Leitrim, Ireland. "Drumsna is a clean, picturesque, and beautiful little village on the banks of the Shannon."\* As early as May, 1758, Wesley preached there. Strawbridge was converted; went to Sligo, where he joined the Society, and was soon heard of as a preacher at Kilmore and elsewhere. Some now "fallen asleep" were accustomed to speak of him as "a man of devoted piety and considerable preaching abilities." Marrying a Methodist wife at Terryhugan—Miss Piper—he bid farewell to Ireland to find a home in the New World. He settled, probably in 1760, on Sam's Creek—then in the backwoods of Maryland—and opened his house for preaching. A log meeting-house was built a few years afterward, about a mile from his home. This cradle of American Methodism is entitled to minute description: "Twenty-two feet square; the logs sawed for a door-way on one side, and smaller openings made on the other three sides for windows; and no regular floor." In this primitive chapel, which has had many successors in our land and Church, Strawbridge preached for many years. Although it had no "regular floor," it had a pulpit, for under the pulpit of the log meeting-house were buried two of the preacher's little children. From this point the hearty and zealous evangelist itinerated into Eastern Maryland, Virginia, Delaware, and Southern Pennsylvania. Doubtless, he gathered not a little of the fruit where Whitefield had shaken the boughs.

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\* Ireland and the Centenary of American Methodism, by Win. Crook, D.D.

He is described as "of medium size, dark complexion, black hair; had a sweet voice, and was an excellent singer." His more important qualities may be read in his work and history.

The Sam's Creek Society, consisting at first of twelve or fifteen persons, was a fountain of good influence to the county and the State. It early gave four or five preachers to the itinerancy. Strawbridge founded Methodism in Baltimore and Harford counties. The first Society in the former was organized by him at the house of David Evans,\* near the city, and the first chapel in the county was erected by them. The first native Methodist preacher of the continent, Richard Owen, was one of his converts. He was long the most effective co-laborer of Strawbridge, traveling the country in all directions, founding Societies and opening the way for the coming itinerants.†

Strawbridge was poor, and the family were often straitened for food; but he was a man of strong faith, and would say to them on leaving, "Meat will be sent here to-day." The calls upon him to go to distant parts of the country to preach became, in course of time, so frequent and pressing that his family were likely to suffer in his absence, so that it became a question with him, "Who will keep the wolf from my door while I am abroad looking after the lost sheep?" Meanwhile, his friendly neighbors agreed to cultivate his little farm without charge, and to see that his wife and children wanted for nothing during his absence. In this way this zealous servant of Christ continued to labor in different parts of Frederick, and throughout the length and breadth of Baltimore county, breaking up new ground, forming new Societies, and establishing permanent places for preaching—God working through him by the word which he preached. It is delightful to look back, after a lapse of ninety years and upward, and recount one by one the long list of those who could claim this primitive missionary as the instrument of their salvation, many of them persons of intelligence and of influence in the communities in which they lived, joining themselves first to Christ, and then devoting their substance to build up a godly seed for generations following; and of these we recur with feelings of satisfaction to the parents of the late Dr. Thomas E. Bond.‡

Continuing his journey southward through Virginia and Carolina, Whitefield pauses at New Berne, where "good impressions were made." "This, with every other place, being open and exceedingly desirous to hear the gospel," he says, "makes me almost determined to come back early in the spring." Having preached in Charleston, he once more arrived at Savannah, and had the happi-

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\* David Evans said that, "about the year 1764, he embraced the Methodist religion under Mr. Strawbridge." (Dr. Hamilton's Discourse on "Early Methodism in Maryland.")

† History of Methodist E. Church, by Dr. Stevens. ‡ Dr. Hamilton, 1856.



ness to find the state of the colony as prosperous as he could wish. "The colony," says he, "is rising fast; nothing but plenty at Bethesda; and all arrears, I trust, will be paid off before I leave it, so that I hope to be freed from these outward incumbrances."

The old Trustee government had given way to the colonial or royal, and a governor and council had affairs in hand, with Habersham in a position of influence. Whitefield had planned a college in connection with the Orphan-house, for the youth of Carolina, Georgia, and the West Indies; but the ecclesiastical authorities in England resisted the granting of the charter proposed by him, though presented and advocated by Dartmouth, unless the conditions were inserted that a Church of England man should be president, and that not extempore prayers, but the Prayer-book, must be daily used in the college. Doubtless the hand of the Charleston Commissary was in this. "That bottom was not broad enough." The charter, on such conditions, was respectfully but firmly declined, and Whitefield and his friends contented themselves with an institution of humbler name, at Bethesda, yet affording much greater facilities for education than any that had been before enjoyed in that quarter.

Whitefield informed the Georgia government that he had expended £12,000 upon the Orphan-house, and now he wished to attach to it a college; that, in order to accomplish his purpose, he was prepared to lay out a considerable sum of money "in purchasing a large number of negroes" for the cultivation of the rice and indigo plantation for the "future support of a president, professors, and tutors;" and he asked the council to grant him, in trust, for the purposes aforesaid, two thousand acres of land. Moreover, he proposed to transfer his plantation from Carolina to the Georgia Colony. He writes:

Bethesda, January 14, 1765. God hath given me great favor in the sight of the governor, council, and assembly. A memorial was presented for an additional grant of land, consisting of two thousand acres. It was immediately complied with. Both houses addressed the governor in behalf of the intended college. Every heart seems to leap for joy, at the prospect of its future utility.

February 13. Yesterday morning, the governor, and Lord G——, with several other gentlemen, favored me with their company to breakfast. Now farewell, my beloved Bethesda; surely the most delightful place in all the southern parts of America. What a blessed winter have I had! Peace and love, and harmony and plenty, reign here! Thanks be to God, all outward things are settled on this side the water. The auditing the accounts, and laying the foundation for

a college, hath silenced enemies and comforted friends. The finishing of this affair confirms my call to England at this time.

On his way to New York to take ship, he writes: "All along from Charleston to this place, the cry is, 'For Christ's sake stay and preach to us!' O for a thousand lives to spend for Jesus!" Arriving in England in time to dedicate the Bath Chapel of the Countess of Huntingdon, he tarried there until Trevecca College was opened, filling up the space between with itinerant labors over the United Kingdom.\* Quitting England for the last time, he landed (Nov. 30) in Charleston, and was welcomed by the people as never before.

From his home at Bethesda, he writes (January 11, 1770): "Every thing exceeds my most sanguine expectations. I am almost tempted to say, 'It is good for me to be here;' but all must give way to gospel-ranging—divine employ!" In another letter: "And the increase in this colony is almost incredible. Two wings are added to the Orphan-house, for the accommodation of students; of which Governor Wright laid the foundation, March 25, 1769." Bethesda is head-quarters for awhile, and it is pleasant to witness his joy, after so long toil. The Orphan-house has nearly done its work, and the Lord comforts his servant at the last. Of the many letters in this strain, we extract from a few. In April, he writes to a London friend:

You are daily remembered at a throne of grace. How glad would many be to see our Goshen, our Bethel, our Bethesda! Never did I enjoy such domestic peace, comfort, and joy, during my whole pilgrimage. It is unspeakable, it is full of glory. Peace, peace unutterable, attends our paths; and a pleasing prospect of increasing, useful prosperity is continually rising to our view. We enjoy a little heaven on earth here. With regret I go northward, as far as Philadelphia at least, next month. Though I am persuaded, as the house is now altered, I should be cooler here during the summer's heat than at any other place I know of, where I used to go. I should be glad to treat you with some of the produce of our colony, which is much earlier than yours. The audits, etc., sent with this, be pleased to communicate to all my real friends. Every thing concurs to show me that Bethesda's affairs must go on as yet in their old channel. I wish some books might be procured for our infant library. In all probability, I shall not return hither till November. Was ever any man blessed with such a set of skillful, peaceful, laborious helpers? O Bethesda, my *Bethel*, my *Peniel*! My happiness is inconceivable. A few hundred besides what is already devoted would finish all, I do not in the least doubt. I have had nine or ten prizes lately. You know what I mean—nine

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\* It was on this trip to England that he buried his wife, concerning whom this may suffice: When one, on a certain occasion, asked how Whitefield had married, the reply was, "Not so well as Charles Wesley, nor so bad as John."

or ten orphans have lately been taken in. Halleluiah! halleluiah! let chapel, Tabernacle, heaven, and earth resound with halleluiah! I can no more. My heart is too big to speak or add more.

With such feelings he leaves Bethesda, not to return. On his way northward from Philadelphia, he writes: "Pulpits, hearts, and affections seem to be as open and enlarged toward me as ever. Praise the Lord, O my soul! As yet I have my old plan in view--to travel in these northern parts all summer, and return late in the fall to Georgia. Through infinite mercy, I still continue in good health, and more and more in love every day with a pilgrim life. People of all ranks flock as much as ever. To all the Episcopal churches, as well as most of the other places of worship, I have free access. Notwithstanding I preach twice on the Lord's-day, and three or four times a week besides, yet I am rather better than I have been for many years. To the long-suffering, never-failing Lord be all the glory. So many new as well as old doors are open, and so many invitations sent from various quarters, that I know not which way to turn myself. Perhaps I may not see Georgia till Christmas. As yet I keep to my intended plan in respect to my returning. Lord Jesus, direct my goings in thy way!"

Since Whitefield was last in New York, the Methodists had organized there under Philip Embury, an Irish local preacher who came out the same year with Strawbridge, but had not been quite so forward in his work. They had built a church and called on Wesley for help.

On the third of August, 1769, in the Conference at Leeds, he said from the chair: "We have a pressing call from our brethren of New York (who have built a preaching-house) to come over and help them. Who is willing to go?" Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor responded. "What can we do further in token of our brotherly love? Let us now take a collection among ourselves." This was immediately done, and out of it £50 were allotted toward the payment of the New York debt, and £20 given to the brethren for their passage.

While Whitefield was on the Atlantic making for the port of Charleston, these two missionaries were sailing before the same winds for the port of Philadelphia. He met them and gave them his blessing. His mission of preparation was drawing to a close, and they were to enter into his labors where he left off.

On Saturday morning, September 29, 1770, he set out for

Boston; but before he came to Newburyport, where he had engaged to preach next morning, he was importuned to preach by the way, at Exeter. A friend observing him more uneasy than usual, said: "Sir, you are more fit to go to bed than to preach." To which Whitefield answered, "True, sir;" but turning aside he clasped his hands together, and looking up said: "Lord Jesus, I am weary *in* thy work, but not *of* thy work. If I have not yet finished my course, let me go and speak for thee once more in the fields, seal thy truth, and come home and die." He preached in the open air to accommodate the multitudes that came to hear him, no house being able to contain them, and continued his discourse nearly two hours, by which he was greatly fatigued. In the afternoon he set off for Newburyport, where he arrived that evening, and soon after retired to rest, intent on preaching the next day. He awoke many times in the night, and complained very much of an oppression at his lungs, breathing with great difficulty. Oppressed by asthma, early in the morning he sat up in the bed, and prayed that God would be pleased to bless his preaching where he had been, and also bless his preaching that day, that more souls might be brought to Christ; prayed for direction, whether he should winter at Boston or hasten to the southward; prayed for a blessing on all his labors and his friends in America and Europe, for Bethesda and the Tabernacle. At six o'clock he rose and moved quickly to the open window for air, and said to his servant, "*I am dying;*" and sitting in his chair he expired. He was buried beneath the pulpit of Federal Street Church, Newburyport, and there his remains are to this day.

Eulogy, or a summing up of such a life and character, is needless. Dying testimony was not required of him whose living testimony had so often glorified his Lord. He had a presentiment that it would be so in his case. So ardent were his desires after the heavenly happiness that he often longed to finish his work, and to go home to his Saviour. "Blessed be God," said he, "the prospect of death is pleasant to my soul. I would not live here always; I want to be gone. Sometimes it arises from a fear of falling, sometimes from a prospect of future labors and sufferings. But there are times when my soul has such foretastes of God that I long more eagerly to be with him; and the prospect of the happiness which the spirits of just men made perfect now enjoy often carries me, as it were, into another world."

The impression upon the public mind may be imagined. The funeral-discourses, by leading preachers in Old and New England, would make a volume. Wesley, according to request, delivered a sermon in the Tabernacle worthy of the occasion and of himself. The effect of the announcement of his death upon the inhabitants of the Southern provinces, especially that of Georgia, was most profound. In Savannah all the black cloth in the stores was bought up. The governor and council, in deep mourning, convened at the State-house and went in procession to church, and were received by the organ playing a funeral-dirge, and two funeral-sermons were preached.

Our readers may feel an interest in that portion of his will which disposes of Bethesda affairs:

In respect to my American concerns, which I have engaged in simply and solely for His great name's sake, I leave that building, commonly called the Orphan-house, at Bethesda, in the province of Georgia, together with all the other buildings lately erected thereon, and likewise all other buildings, lands, negroes, books, furniture, and every other thing whatsoever, which I now stand possessed of in the province of Georgia aforesaid, to that elect lady, that mother in Israel, that mirror of true and undefiled religion, the Right Honorable Selina, Countess Dowager of Huntingdon; desiring that as soon as may be after my decease, the plan of the intended Orphan-house Bethesda College may be prosecuted; if not practicable, or eligible, to pursue the present plan of the Orphan-house academy, on its old foundation and usual channel; but if her ladyship should be called to enter her glorious rest before my decease, I bequeath all the buildings, lands, negroes, and every thing before mentioned, which I now stand possessed of in the province of Georgia aforesaid, to my dear fellow-traveler, and faithful, invariable friend, the Honorable James Habersham, president of His Majesty's honorable council.

The Countess entered upon the discharge of the trust earnestly. All the ministerial students who had gone out from the college were called in to form "the Mission to North America," and a solemn assembly was held at Trevecca for a fortnight. In due time several missionaries who had been selected and ordained for this field sailed for Georgia, with a Church of England president for Bethesda, and the Countess's own housekeeper to put things in proper order, "that nothing should be wanting on their parts to render the establishment of the president, master, and students suitable to the character they bore as belonging to the Countess of Huntingdon." Visions of missionary fields among the natives, and in distant settlements, were bright. Such a jubilee as attended the preparation and leave-taking is seldom equaled at

this day, when missionary operations are more frequently enterprised. The Countess soon added an estate of her own to the Bethesda plantation, where slaves—in addition to the fifty left by Whitefield—cultivated rice and indigo, for the support of the institution. The preachers were well received by the people. The first remittance from the proceeds of the trust sent by her agents, Tatnall & Glenn (£26, 10s), the Countess returned to them to be expended on the trust, and marks the occasion:

I must therefore request that a woman slave be purchased with it, and that she may be called Selina, after me, in order best to establish that period of my only receipt of money during the whole course of my possessing that trust, or my own property there; and that in your accounts it may fully fix and determine the time of this remittance, taking care that it may appear as by my special appointment.\*

The conduct of business so complicated as an orphanage, a college, a mission, and a large plantation, with the owner thousands of miles away, turned out as might be supposed. Her clerical superintendent, Piercy, lived high, and sent no itemized accounts to her ladyship, who had remitted, and was remitting, large sums to keep things going. She complains of “his having driven to Boston forty-one of my best slaves and sold them,” and appropriated the large proceeds, all without her consent.†

The Orphan-house was accidentally destroyed by fire. The Revolutionary War came on, and the reverend president and missionaries took advantage of the reduction of Charleston by the British forces, in 1780, to return to England; and the estates of the Countess were confiscated.

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\* The devout Hervey spent the winter 1751–2 in London, mostly at the house of Whitefield. A mutual review of their theological works occupied part of their time. After sharing Whitefield’s hospitality, Hervey left a singular gift. “When you please to demand, my brother will pay you £30, for the purchase of a negro. And may the Lord Jesus Christ give you, or rather take for himself, the precious soul of the poor slave!” Whitefield readily acquiesced. He answered: “You are resolved not to die in my debt. I think to call your intended purchase *Weston*, and shall take care to remind him by whose means he was brought under the everlasting gospel.”

† The Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon (Vol. II., pp. 266–271).

## CHAPTER XXI.

Arminian Methodism Planted—First Laborers: Strawbridge, Embury; Williams; King—These Irregulars Occupying the Ground and Preparing the Way—Which was the First—The Log Meeting-house—The Grave of Strawbridge.

WHILE an abortive attempt was being made, under the patronage of an English countess, to establish Calvinistic Methodism in Georgia, the foundation of its Arminian type was well laid in Maryland by the poor Irish farmer, Strawbridge; the chapel at New York, under the carpenter, Embury, was prospering; and Robert Williams, with John King, was forming classes and planning circuits in Virginia and North Carolina.

The bigotry of Louis XIV., who had expelled the Huguenots from France, sent also the Protestants of the Lower Rhine—the Palatinate—into many lands for refuge. They were of German blood and Lutheran faith; and the armies of Turenne, by order of his popish master, were let loose upon them in 1688. Houses and villages were laid waste by fire and sword. The Elector Palatine could see from the towers of Manheim, his capital, no less than two cities and twenty-five villages on fire at once. About three thousand of these Palatines came to Pennsylvania and North Carolina. Over a hundred families settled in Limerick, Ireland. They were thrifty in building and planting, but being isolated both by religion and language, their moral condition became as bad as that of their neighbors, or worse.

In 1752 Wesley preached in one of the villages of these Palatines. He repeated his visit. Philip Embury was one of the early converts, and a Society was formed in his village. In 1760 Philip and his family, two of his brothers and their families, Paul Heck and Barbara his wife, with a goodly company of their countrymen, emigrated to New York. Philip Embury was born in Ballingran, in 1728. It is probable that he heard Wesley on the occasion of his first visit to Limerick, and there is a tradition in the family that he always traced his conversion to that sermon. A small book, in the possession of his family, has the following entry, in his own handwriting: "On Christmas-day, being Monday, ye 25th of December, in the year 1752, the Lord

shone into my soul by a glimpse of his redeeming love, being an earnest of my redemption in Christ Jesus, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. PHIL. EMBURY." He was shortly after appointed a class-leader, and was consistent and faithful. Within a brief period he became a local preacher. He was a carpenter; and it is believed that the principal portion of the timber work in connection with the first church among the Palatines was done by Embury's own hand. In 1758 Wesley held a Conference, for the second time, in Limerick. At this Conference, among those recommended for the itinerancy were Philip Embury of Ballingran, and William Thompson of Enniskillen.\* Philip was put on the "reserve list," and while building the church met with Mary Switzer, and married her; and thus put an end to his itinerant expectations, and got turned to America. Thompson became a leader of the Wesleyan host, and was its first president after Wesley's death. "The presumption is," says an excellent authority, "that Embury attempted some religious service shortly after landing in New York; but being constitutionally timid and retiring, and meeting with little or no encouragement, and having no suitable place in which to conduct the services, he abandoned the idea of attempting any public services, at least for the present. He joined the Lutherans, and we have the testimony of his son that he never abandoned the practice of family worship. During the period in which Embury's 'talent lay hid in a napkin' several of his children were born, who were baptized among the Lutherans."†

In 1765 a second party of Palatine families arrived in New York, from Ballingran and the old neighborhood. Their arrival doubtless awakened tender memories, and brought fresh reports of the class-meetings and congregations where those immigrants, who were Methodists, formerly worshiped; for it seems the most of them were Wesleyans, or members of the Irish Protestant Church. The Palatines who came first had backslidden generally, and the new-comers were no better. When they met, after the day's labor, card-playing formed the staple amusement. There is no evidence that Embury ever played with them. One evening, in the autumn of 1766, a large company were assembled playing cards as usual, when Barbara Heck came in, and hastily seized the cards, and throwing them into the fire, administered a

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\* Ireland and American Methodism, by the Rev. W. Crook, D.D. † Ibid.



rebuke to all concerned. She then went to Embury's house, who was her cousin, and told him what she saw, and what she had done, adding, with great earnestness: "Philip, you must preach to us, or we shall all go to hell, and God will require our blood at your hands!" Philip attempted a defense by saying, "How can I preach, as I have neither house nor congregation?" "Preach," said this noble woman, "in your own house, and to your own company." Before she left she prevailed on him to make the attempt, and within a few days Embury preached the first Methodist sermon in New York, in his own hired house, to a congregation of five persons, one of whom was Betty, the negro servant. Of course Paul Heck and Barbara were there.

"The humble cottage, with a single window in front," became too small, and an "upper room" was hired; and in 1767 this yielded to the more accommodating Rigging Loft—a room sixty by eighteen feet. Here Embury preached Sunday mornings at six o'clock, and Sunday evenings; and after a time, on Thursday evenings.

When this primitive church had been worshiping for about three months in the Rigging Loft, one Sunday evening a strange-looking military gentleman appeared among them. He was dressed as an officer, and had lost one of his eyes in a battle. He wore a green shade over the eye, and his appearance caused general excitement and inquiry. The fears of the little flock speedily gave place to joy on learning that he was a Methodist, who had been converted, under Wesley, at Bristol, three years before; that he was now barrack-master at Albany; and, best of all, that he was a local preacher, who would assist Embury in ministering the word of life. Captain Webb is a memorable figure in those days. He preached in his regimentals, his trusty sword lying on the desk, and drew vast crowds. His word was attended with uncommon power. "The sword of the Spirit was buried up to the hilt in the refuges of lies," and the Rigging Loft, Sunday after Sunday, resounded with the joyful notes of victory, and songs of praise to a pardoning God. Under his ministry, and that of Embury, multitudes found peace through believing, and the place became too strait for them.

A site was leased on John street in 1768, and purchased two years after. The people generally encouraged the enterprise, from the mayor to the poorest citizen. The subscription paper.

which is still preserved, contains the names of two hundred and fifty persons. Captain Webb stands first in amount, one hundred and fifty dollars. The chapel was built of stone, faced with blue plaster—sixty feet in length, forty-two in breadth. Dissenters were not yet allowed to erect “regular churches” in the city; the new building was therefore provided with “a fire-place and chimney” to avoid “the difficulty of the law.” It was called “The Wesley Chapel.” Embury superintended the work, and made the pulpit with his own hands, and then, October 30, 1768, got into it, and preached the dedication sermon. The opening sermon—just two years after the first sermon in his own house—was from Hosea x. 12: “Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.”

While the poor members, encouraged by the generous Captain, were yet hesitating over so vast an undertaking, Barbara Heck came forward, and told them that in praying about it these words “with unexpressible sweetness and power” were impressed on her mind: “I, the Lord, will do it.” Embury supplied the pulpit until the arrival of Wesley’s missionaries, when he left New York for the interior of the State, where he died in 1775.

Captain Webb planted Methodism in Philadelphia, and “felled trees” and formed classes in New Jersey and in other parts. He was liberal of means as well as zealous. Being placed on the retired list, with the pay of a captain, in view of his heroic service, he gave himself up to the itinerant work, and went abroad preaching. He corresponded with Wesley, urging the wants of America for laborers, and even stood before the Conference at Leeds (1772), pleading the cause, and brought away two missionaries—Rankin and Shadford. He asked for Joseph Benson, but could not prevail. The old soldier was a chosen vessel for the Northern and Middle colonies. Knowledge of Methodism in England, education, and position in society, gave him advantages which were well used in laying the foundations.

During one of the sessions of Congress, in Philadelphia, John Adams heard him, and describes him as “the old soldier, one of the most eloquent men I ever heard. He reaches the imagination and touches the passions very well; he expresses himself with great propriety.” A Methodist writer says: “They saw the warrior in his face, and heard the missionary in his voice; under

his holy eloquence they trembled, they wept, and fell down under his mighty word." He was a preacher of great earnestness. His ringing voice was heard in the Foundry, and Wesley writes: "I admire the wisdom of God in still raising up various preachers, according to the various tastes of men. The Captain is all life and fire; therefore, although he is not deep or regular, yet many who would not hear a better preacher, flock to hear him, and many are convinced under his preaching." To the end of his days he was persuaded that a ministering spirit, a guardian angel, had, through Divine mercy, attended him all the way in his diversified pilgrimage. His long and useful life, closed where his spiritual life began—in Bristol. He contributed to building Portland Chapel, and in a vault beneath its communion-table he was buried. The venerable and valiant evangelist was laid to rest by "a crowded, weeping audience;" and the trustees erected a marble monument to his memory within its walls, pronouncing him "brave, active, courageous—faithful, zealous, successful—the principal instrument in erecting this chapel."

The first itinerant preacher who came over to the help of our cause in the New World was Robert Williams. "He was taken out to travel at the Conference of 1766, and his name is found in the Minutes of that year among the Irish appointments."\* One of his circuits took in Sligo, where he crossed the path, and doubtless saw the tracks, of Robert Strawbridge, whom he much resembled in impetuous usefulness, in boldness of pioneering, and in that spiritual instinct which goes ahead of ecclesiastical logic in solving questions as to what Israel ought to do. He had not an embarrassingly high respect for the Established Church and clergy, and this discounted him with Wesley, who makes a significant entry in his journal, shortly before Williams emigrated to America:

I rode over the Black Mountains to Manorhamilton. There was a general love to the gospel here till simple R. W. preached against the clergy. It is strange every one does not see: 1. The sinfulness of railing at the clergy; if they are blind leaders of the blind, then (says our Lord) "let them alone." 2. The foolishness of it. It can never do good, and has frequently done much harm.†

About March, 1769, tidings came of Embury's success, and

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\* Ireland and American Methodism, by W. Crook, D.D. This is our best authority on the subject. Most accounts of Robert Williams represent him as a local preacher, or lay evangelist. † Ibid.

Williams spoke to Wesley (who had had an urgent letter from New York), offering to go, and asking his sanction and authority. Wesley consented to his going, with the understanding that he was to "labor in subordination with the missionaries who were about to be sent out." Williams's impatient zeal panted for the moral conflict in the New World, and he resolved to be the first itinerant who appeared in America. He was poor, and had no way of paying his passage. Hearing that his friend Ashton was ready to sail, Williams hastily left Castlebar, sold his horse to pay his debts and pay his way to Dublin, and, carrying his saddle-bags on his arm, set off for the ship, with a loaf of bread and a bottle of milk. Ashton met him according to promise, and paid his passage. They arrived in New York in August, 1769, "two months at least" before Boardman and Pilmoor, the regular appointees. Robert Williams was "the apostle of Methodism" in Virginia and North Carolina, the spiritual father of Jesse Lee, who planted Methodism in New England, and of a multitude of converted souls who will bless God that ever he was born.

He took Embury's place in Wesley Chapel, and in connection with the other missionaries labored in New York and vicinity until 1771. The records of Old John Street Society show suggestive items of expenses incurred by the stewards—cash paid for a hat, a book, a trunk, a cloak, for "Mr. Williams;" but the principal item is for keeping his horse, showing that some circuit work and country excursions were connected with a city of twenty-two thousand inhabitants.

Naturally he would seek the companionship of Strawbridge, and with him, probably, he spent the fall and winter, laboring in connection with John King, another vigorous but irregular helper, lately come out; and under their ministry a good work began in Baltimore City and county, and in the adjoining country, the fruits of which remain to this day.

The date of his first appearance in Virginia is 1772. He landed at Norfolk early in the year, and at once opened his mission. He preached his first sermon at the door of the court-house. Standing on the steps, he began to sing. Attracted by the novel sound, the people gathered around and gazed on him with astonishment. The hymn finished, he kneeled and prayed. He then announced his text, and preached to a most disorderly crowd. A few listened, but most of them talked, laughed, and moved about in all directions. Nothing daunted, the sturdy missionary poured from a full heart the simple truths of the gospel. To the wondering multitude he was an enigma. Never had they heard the like.

"Sometimes," said they, "he would preach, then he would pray, then he would swear, and at times he would sing." Unaccustomed to hearing preachers freely use the words, "hell," "devil," etc., in their sermons, when he warned them of the danger of going to hell, of being damned forever, of dwelling with the devil and his angels, they declared he was swearing. "He is mad," was the verdict. Of course no house was opened to entertain a madman. He preached again. A few hearts were touched, and the stranger was fed and sheltered, not as mad, but as speaking the words of truth and soberness. The tree of Methodism was thus planted in an uncongenial soil, but, watered from on high, it struck its roots deep, and put forth goodly branches, bearing much fruit.\*

He returned a hundred members from Virginia to the first Annual Conference. Jarratt, the evangelical clergyman, wrote an account of "the work of God in these parts"—Sussex and Brunswick counties—and says:

It was chiefly carried on by the Methodists. The first of them that appeared there was Robert Williams, who was a plain, active, indefatigable preacher of the gospel. He was greatly blessed in detecting the hypocrite, razing false foundations, and stirring believers up to press after a present salvation from the remains of sin. He came to my house in the month of March, in the year 1773. The next year others of his brethren came, who gathered many Societies, both in this neighborhood and in other places as far as North Carolina. They now began to ride the circuit, and to take care of the Societies already formed, which were rendered a happy means both of deepening and spreading the work of God.

Williams formed the first circuit in Virginia. A signal example of his usefulness was the conversion of Jesse Lee, whose parents opened their doors for him to preach. They were converted. Two of their sons became Methodist ministers, and their other children shared largely in the blessings of the gospel which he proclaimed with such holy ardor and success. Jesse Lee describes the man and his manner in days when the Toleration Act was not always a protection:

His manner of preaching was well calculated to awaken careless sinners, and to encourage penitent mourners. He spared no pains in order to do good. He frequently went to church to hear the Established clergy, and as soon as divine service was ended he would go out of the church, and standing on a stump, block, or log, began to sing, pray, and then preach to hundreds of people. It was common with him, after preaching, to ask most of the people some question about the welfare of their souls.

He was the first preacher in America that followed the example of Wesley in the circulation of tracts and books. Jesse Lee tells us that he "reprinted many of Wesley's books and spread

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\* Bennett's Memorials of Methodism in Virginia.

them through the country." He issued Wesley's sermons in tract form, and circulated them freely with the happiest results. After marrying he ceased to travel as a regular itinerant. His home was about midway between Suffolk and Portsmouth. Here he died. For many years his grave was remembered and pointed out, but all trace of it has disappeared. "We look with peculiar feelings on him who stands first in a great cause." Robert Williams printed the first Methodist book in America, he was the first to marry, the first to locate, the first to die, and the first of that band of heroes who passed into the City of God.

John King is the last of the memorable irregulars to be mentioned who took possession before the appointed missionaries came to America, and becoming naturalized, clave to the soil and to the people, and stood by the cause of Methodism when all but one of the regulars left the field. There is a lesson here touching the theory of missionary success. The impulse that draws or drives a man into such a field is a greater power and guarantee against failure than any fund or association standing at his back. John King was a strong character, and did service at a time when such men only make themselves heard. He was born in England, in 1746—the youngest of three sons. He had studied at Oxford University, and in a London medical college. Whether he ever graduated, we do not know. He heard John Wesley preach, and was converted. His father's family bitterly opposed the Methodist movement. Finally he was disinherited. It was the old story. The love for Jesus waxed all the warmer in his heart when he felt that he was "persecuted for righteousness' sake." So far from recanting his faith, he was now impressed with the conviction that he must preach. He went to Wesley and opened his heart to him, and that decided his course. We next find him in Philadelphia, in the latter part of 1769, burdened with the conviction, "Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel!" He offered himself to the Society for license, but they hesitated. However, he determined to preach, and made an appointment "in the potter's field." He proclaimed his first message in that humblest of sanctuaries, over the graves of the poor, and thus began a career of eminent usefulness. Some of his Methodist brethren heard him, and he was licensed, and next appears in Wilmington, Del., "among a few people who were there earnestly seeking the Lord." In Maryland, Strawbridge

greeted him with hearty welcome, and they wrought zealously together in Baltimore county. King was a man of invincible zeal. On his first visit to Harford county, in 1769, before he began religious services in a large congregation, he stood some time in silent prayer, covering his face with his hands. The spectacle struck the attention of a young man with such effect that he was awakened, and was soon after converted under the ministry of the stranger. King was the first Methodist to preach in the city of Baltimore. Here he preached his first sermon from a "blacksmith's block, at the corner of French and Broad streets," his next from "a table at the junction of Baltimore and Calvert streets." Five years afterward Methodism was strong enough there to entertain an Annual Conference, and Baltimore ever since has sat as queen among Methodist cities. His street-preaching procured him an invitation that was not repeated—to preach in St. Paul's Church. He "made the dust fly from the old velvet cushion." Wesley, who knew him in England, corresponded with him in America; he calls him "stubborn and headstrong." One of Wesley's letters to him conveys so good a lesson that it may be quoted for the benefit of all public speakers, and especially for the benefit of earnest young preachers:

My dear brother, always take advice or reproof as a favor; it is the surest mark of love. I advised you once and you took it as an affront; nevertheless I will do it once more. Scream no more at the peril of your soul. God now warns you by me, whom he has set over you. Speak as earnestly as you can, but do not scream. Speak with all your heart, but with a moderate voice. It was said of our Lord, "He shall not *cry*:" the word properly means, he shall not *scream*. Herein be a follower of me, as I am of Christ. I often speak loud, often vehemently, but I never scream. I never strain myself; I dare not; I know it would be a sin against God and my own soul. Perhaps one reason why that good man, Thomas Walsh, yea, and John Manners too, were in such grievous darkness before they died, was because they shortened their own lives. O John, pray for an advisable and teachable temper. By nature you are very far from it; you are stubborn and headstrong. Your last letter was written in a very wrong spirit.

John King's name appears among the ten in the first printed Minutes who made up the first Annual Conference in America, and from it he was sent to New Jersey; next year to Norfolk; and next year he married in Brunswick county, Va., and soon after located. The Church prospered and enlarged where John King labored. After locating he bought a home in Franklin county, N. C., near the present county-seat, Louis-

bourg, where he lived until 1789 or 1790, when he removed to Wake county, about ten miles west of Raleigh. At the Annual Conference of 1777 he was appointed, with John Dickens, LeRoy Cole, and Edward Pride, to North Carolina Circuit. This was the second year of the existence of a circuit in that State. At the close of the year they reported nine hundred and thirty members. Carolina Circuit the year before had reported six hundred and eighty-three members in Society; so that, notwithstanding the war there had been an increase of two hundred and forty-seven. King's name does not appear on the printed Minutes after this year. He practiced medicine to support his family, and served the Church as a local preacher. Bishop Asbury makes frequent and honorable mention of him in his journal; and there is abundant evidence that he continued to the end an earnest, fearless, faithful preacher of the gospel, and his house was a favorite stopping-place with the old Bishop. King was present at the first Methodist Conference in North Carolina, convened at Green Hill's, in Franklin county, one mile south of the town of Louisburg, April 20, 1785. Coke and Asbury presided. There is a family tradition that as he entered the room in which the Conference had assembled, Dr. Coke, without a word of salutation, called upon him to pray. Laying aside his saddlebags, he began his petition. He died while on a visit to New Berne, in 1794, and was buried at his home in Wake county. His children—six in number—were all members of the Methodist Church. Two of his sons, John and William, were Methodist preachers.\*

Robert Strawbridge, both in order of time and talent and service, stands at the head of the noble "irregulars" who founded Arminian Methodism in America. Embury is worthy of much honor, but the builder of the Log Meeting-house of more. They were contemporaneous in arrival, but not in labor. Embury was a gentle spirit, modest and diffident. His candle was hid under a bushel for six years, and might have staid there

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\* These facts concerning John King are taken from "Sketches of the Pioneers of Methodism in North Carolina," by the Rev. M. H. Moore (1884), who had access to family records. The descendants of John King are worthily represented in the Methodist ministry and laity of Kentucky and Tennessee to this day. The first Treasurer of Vanderbilt University, Dempsey Weaver, Esq., was connected with a branch of the family.



had not Barbara Heck taken it off, and compelled his feeble but pure light to shine. His active period in New York extended through three years, when he removed from the city. Not so with Strawbridge: bold, prompt, zealous, he opened his house for preaching so soon as he had a house, and went to saving souls; and this employment he continued for twenty-one years. At his death, in 1781, Societies had been formed in three States, and a strong band of preachers had been raised up, who were going all abroad with the glorious tidings.

The Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, giving a "brief account of the rise of Methodism" in their preface to the Discipline, in 1790, after alluding to the labors of Embury, in a way that possibly intimates precedence, say that "about the same time Robert Strawbridge, a local preacher from Ireland, settled in Frederick county, in the State of Maryland, and preaching there, formed some Societies." They further add that "the first Methodist church was built in New York in 1768 or 1769." The matter of fact involved was perhaps not considered of much importance, and an error as to the precedence of the two men in forming Societies and building churches might easily be made at the time this scrap of history was written. Sam's Creek, in Maryland, was not so conspicuous as John Street, in New York, nor so often visited. The weakness and wants of the latter gave it a place in history when an appeal was made to the British Conference for men and money to help pay it out and to preach. The Log Meeting-house rejoiced in freedom from debt, and the fruitful ministry of its pastor had surrounded him with helpers better adapted to the field than any he would be likely to obtain abroad. Philip Gatch, William Watters, Owen, Durbin, Freeborn Garretson, and Haggerty—brought forward directly or indirectly by Strawbridge's ministry—left him and his people under no necessity of sending across the sea for men or money. The very success of the Maryland planting of Methodism has caused it to be obscured in early records. By a most respectable authority the following sentence is cast into the scale of public opinion against the historic claim of the Log Meeting-house: "This building, however, though sometimes spoken of as the first Methodist church in Maryland, was never deeded to the Church, and was never finished." \* Of course, if not the first in

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\* Simpson's Cyclopædia of Methodism: Article, "Strawbridge."

Maryland, it cannot be the first in America, and that settles the claim of priority in favor of New York. But it might be asked, When is a log meeting-house "finished?" This one served the people, and multitudes heard the word of God, and were quickened and saved. One shop was not "finished" like the other, but the work turned out is the proper test in comparing the two. A bold spring gushing up from amid rough rocks is better for a water-supply than the trickling drops from a polished marble font. As for its never being "deeded to the Church," it is enough to say, lots on John street were more valuable than lots on Sam's Creek. There was no danger of losing the Log Meeting-house. No contest for title has ever been heard of.

Another author, who evidently is inclined to declare the weight of historic testimony to be in favor of the priority of the Log Meeting-house, explains the strange fact that nearly all the books put Embury and John Street before Strawbridge and Sam's Creek: the case was not beyond controversy, and the uncertainty was overcome "by balancing the importance of one event against the priority of another." \*

Even if this unusual canon of historical research be accepted, by every token the Strawbridge church comes to the front. If any notable preacher or layman was developed in the first generation from what it has become popular to style the "cradle of American Methodism" (John Street), history fails to record the name. But says an eminent historian: "Several preachers were rapidly raised up by Strawbridge in his travels in Baltimore and Harford counties; Sater Stephenson, Nathan Perigo, Richard Webster, and others; and many laymen, whose families have been identified with the whole subsequent progress of Methodism in their respective localities, if not in the nation generally." † And the Log Meeting-house was the beginning.

The Minutes of the first Conference (1773) show one thousand one hundred and sixty members—the whole numerical strength of Methodism in America; and of these five hundred are in Maryland, one hundred in Virginia, and one hundred and eighty in New York. In 1784, at the organization of Episcopal

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\* Daniel's Illustrated History of Methodism, page 377. The Northern Division of Episcopal Methodism celebrated 1866 as the centenary of the first Society and first sermon; but the Southern Division took no part in the celebration.

† Dr. Stevens's History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Vol. I.

Methodism, more than four-fifths of the fourteen thousand nine hundred and eighty-three members were in Maryland and south of Maryland. The prophecy of Israel upon Joseph has been fulfilled in the history of the work begun by Strawbridge: "Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall; the archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him; but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob." \*

Freeborn Garretson relates his first interview with Strawbridge, showing that he was strong elsewhere as well as in the pulpit. He knew how to make the fireside profitable:

He came to the house of a gentleman near where I lived to stay all night. I had never heard him preach; but as I had a great desire to be in company with a person who had caused so much talk in the country, I went over and sat and heard him converse until nearly midnight; and when I retired it was with these thoughts—I have never spent a few hours so agreeably in my life. He spent most of the time in explaining Scripture, and in giving interesting anecdotes; and perhaps one of them will do to relate here: A congregation came together in a certain place, and a gentleman who was hearing thought that the preacher had directed his whole sermon to him, and he retired home after the sermon in disgust. However, he concluded to hear him once more, and hid himself behind the people, so that the preacher should not see him; it was the old story—his character was delineated. He retired dejected; but concluded that possibly the preacher saw him, and said, "I will try him once more;" he did so, and hid himself behind the door. The preacher took for his text, "And a man shall be as a hiding-place," etc. In the midst of the sermon, the preacher cried out, "Sinner, come from your scouting-hole!" The poor fellow came forward, looked the preacher in the face, and said, "You are a wizard, and the devil is in you; I will hear you no more."

The original log-house gave way to a better-built one, three miles south-east, on Pipe Creek; the substitute or successor was called Poulson Chapel, built in 1783. Of all the costly temples built for the worship of God, since that day, by the Methodists, none may compare with that original, of log walls and board cover and puncheon seats. And yet, if they had continued in it after they were able to build better, the blessing of God would

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\* In 1784 the total number of Methodists in the United States, except itinerants, was 14,983, of whom 13,331 were in the Southern States; and of the 65 chapels built, 56 were in the Southern States. In 1800 the total number was 63,958, of whom 45,282 were in the Southern States. In 1812 the total number was 195,357, with 122,561 in the Southern States. In 1820 the total number was 260,275, and of these 133,004 were in the Southern States.

not have continued with them. In 1800 the stone church now standing took the place of Poulson Chapel.\* Here, in 1801, Bishops Asbury and Whatcoat held a Conference. Not a few of the pioneer settlers were alive, and Asbury had means of correct information on local history. We quote from his journal (Vol. III., page 27):

April 29. Wednesday we had a large assembly at Goshen meeting-house. Brother Whatcoat preached. We came on that evening to Levin Warfield's.

Thursday, 30. We arrived to dine at Alexander Warfield's, on Sam's Creek, and pushed on to Henry Willis's on Pipe Creek, where it had been our intention to open Conference. We had about forty members present, and sat on Friday, Saturday, and Monday. On Tuesday morning we rose. Our own people and our friends in the settlement were equally kind; and we had rich entertainment. This settlement of Pipe Creek is the richest in the State; here Mr. Strawbridge formed the first Society in Maryland—and *America*.

The Italics are his own, and have the meaning of a man who, sure of his information, would put a doubtful question to rest.

It is noteworthy that three of the heroic men who were first in the history of American Methodism, had the usual overflow of action and enterprise which brought their successors, representing the reign of law and order, into conflict with them. King was stentorian, and had a will of his own that put Wesley in doubt of him. It required all that force for his triumphant march over the difficulties he met, and in meeting which he made a glorious record. Of the six "rules agreed to by all the preachers present" at the first Conference (1773), Thomas Rankin presiding, two were leveled at Williams and two at Strawbridge. Indeed, about half of the business done, besides stationing the ten preachers, was in restraining the two grand and impetuous men, by whom

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\* "A house which has figured largely in the establishment and perpetuation of Methodism, now called the Stone Chapel, where I have often worshiped in my youthful days;" so says our informant (C. A. W.), a son of Alexander Warfield. Rev. Wm. Hamilton, D.D., whose district embraced the Stone Chapel, and who had the best means of gathering information, in an article in the *Methodist Quarterly Review*, July, 1856, fixes the date of Strawbridge's arrival at Sam's Creek about 1759 or 1760, and the building of the log chapel, 1764. Dr. Geo. C. M. Roberts, of Baltimore, has collected information to the same effect. There is evidence that Henry Maynard (born in 1757) was baptized "about four or five years old" by Strawbridge, at the house of John Maynard, his father, one of Strawbridge's preaching-places.

more than half of the work up to date had been performed. The rules that have Williams in view read thus:

4. None of the preachers in America to reprint any of Mr. Wesley's books, without his authority (when it can be gotten) and the consent of their brethren.

5. Robert Williams to sell the books he has already printed, but to print no more unless under the above restrictions.

What had he done? One of the best things possible for him or any other man at the time to do. The best historian of that day, Jesse Lee, says: "Previous to the formation of this rule, Robert Williams had reprinted many of Mr. Wesley's books, and had spread them through the country, to the great advantage of religion. The sermons, which he printed in small pamphlets, had a very good effect, and gave the people great light and understanding in the nature of the new birth and in the plan of salvation; and, withal, they opened the way in many places for our preachers to be invited to preach where they had never been before."

When Asbury first heard of Williams's publishing enterprise he "was somewhat troubled;" he feared that it had been done "for the sake of gain," and remarks in his journal: "This will not do. It does by no means look well." He wrote to Wesley on the subject, who, in reply, "enjoined that R. W might not print any more books without his consent."

This is that same R. W who had worried Wesley in Ireland by preaching against the clergy, and whom he permitted to come to the American field, but would not send him. Irrepressible genius, who, having started with his saddle-bags and a bottle of milk, was now doing what would have been worthy of incorporated capital to undertake. The matter came before the Conference, and Williams shared the fate of the inventor of the steam locomotive some years later. In recording his death, Asbury puts in his discounting fear as well as his truthful eulogy. It is a singular record in his journal (Vol. I., page 12):

June 26 [1775]. Brother W died. The Lord does all things well; perhaps Brother W. was in danger of being entangled in worldly business, and might thereby have injured the cause of God. So he was taken away from the evil to come.

Thursday 28. I ventured to preach a funeral-sermon at the burial of Brother W. He has been a very useful, laborious man, and the Lord gave him many seals to his ministry. Perhaps no one in America has been an instrument of awakening so many souls as God has awakened by him.

Men are seldom wise above their age. Asbury and the Conference feared that even in printing such tracts and books the greed of gain and of getting rich might creep in among them. This restraint on publishing books by itinerant ministers, without the concurrence of their brethren, long survived in the Discipline, because by the improper publications of accredited ministers the Church was involved, in popular estimation, and discredited. Besides, the connectional principle and economy were in view, out of which grew the Book Concern. But when that undiscovered grave is found in which "R. W." sleeps, no monument that can be raised over it will be too high or too honorable.

The other two rules, which look to Strawbridge, are:

1. Every preacher who acts in connection with Mr. Wesley and the brethren who labor in America is strictly to avoid administering the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper.
2. All the people among whom we labor to be earnestly exhorted to attend the church, and to receive the ordinances there; but in a particular manner to press the people in Maryland and Virginia to the observance of this minute.

Why single out these two States? Strawbridge's sturdy independence, as well as his flaming evangelism, was felt there. The high-souled Irishman did not entertain the current English deference for the State-church. The Lord had called him to preach, and had owned and honored his ministry by the conversion of souls, and he could not see it to be his duty to send them to card-playing and dram-drinking parsons in order to have their children baptized, and to receive the Lord's Supper—parsons whose only claim to superiority was that the hands of an English bishop had been on their heads. In the Log Meeting-house and elsewhere he gave the sacraments to the people whom the Lord had given to him, and baptized their children. To an order or rule regulating among the American Methodist ministry the administration of the ordinances, defining who should and who should not be authorized to administer, and laying down the laws of ministerial gradation and promotion, Strawbridge would doubtless have bowed; but he felt under no obligation to that general self-denying ordinance which English Methodists had imposed on themselves. There is a note in Asbury's journal to the following effect: "That no preacher in our Connection shall be permitted to administer the ordinances, except Mr. Strawbridge, and he under the particular direction of the assistant" (Rankin).

"A concession so singular," says Dr. Abel Stevens, "shows the extraordinary consideration in which Strawbridge was held, the influence he had obtained over the Societies in Maryland and Virginia; perhaps also the conscious necessity of the independent administration of the sacraments in that chief field of the denomination." But great as was this concession, it did not meet Strawbridge's view. Asbury says: "I read a part of our Minutes, to see if Brother Strawbridge would conform, but he appeared to be inflexible."

Asbury's prejudice against Strawbridge for his Hibernian independence in the sacramental controversy continued to the last. "He is no more!" lamented the good Asbury; "he is no more; upon the whole I am inclined to think the Lord took him away in judgment, because he was in a way to do hurt to his cause, and that he saved him in mercy, because from his death-bed conversation he appears to have had hope in his end." Richard Owen, who knew him better, had no doubt about his end. He proclaimed over the coffin: "I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write: Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them."

We find his name in the Minutes of 1773 and of 1775; then it disappears, without note or comment. Probably he could not bear the rule of Boardman, Asbury, and Rankin, who in turn were Superintendents; conscious as he was of the greatness of his mission, and seeing no future for Methodism on the line of policy, touching the ordinances, represented by them. There is no doubt that the influence which went out from Strawbridge hastened the action of Wesley, and strengthened him as to its necessity, when regular and satisfactory provision was at length made for organizing the Methodist Episcopal Church in America.

Strawbridge was impatient; he could not wait, for he saw no prospect of relief on the English plan. In his last days he was provided for. An opulent and generous citizen of Baltimore county, who admired his character and sympathized with his poverty, gave him a farm free of rent for life. It was while residing here, "under the shadow of Hampton," his benefactor's mansion, that in "one of his visiting rounds to his spiritual children he was taken sick, and died in great peace." Richard Owen preached his funeral-sermon in the open air, to a

great throng, "under a tree at the north-west corner of the house.' The hymn is preserved which they sang as they laid the noble emigrant from the banks of the Shannon to sleep:

How blest is our brother, bereft  
Of all that could burden his mind!  
How easy the soul that has left  
The wearisome body behind!

The historian of the event adds: "His grave and also the grave of Mrs. Strawbridge are in the small burying-ground in the orchard, south of the house perhaps some hundred yards. The graves are together, about the center of the ground, and as if nature were reproving the neglect of the Church, she has raised up a large poplar-tree between them as a *living* monument of their worth. Standing on the spot, and looking southward a distance of six or seven miles, the eye rests on Baltimore."



## CHAPTER XXII.

The New Circuit—Eight Missionaries Sent to It—What Became of Them—The War—Asbury Alone Left—The two Blunders—Wesley's Calm Address.

A NEW circuit appears on the list at the Twenty-seventh Annual Conference, held in London, 1770: "No. 50—America." The Western Continent stands there in the Minutes as one circuit; and the preachers are Boardman and Pilmoor, who having gone out since the last session, had sent back a good report. They landed at Philadelphia after a nine weeks' voyage, and entered at once upon their business. Pilmoor was educated at Kingswood School, and had been in the itinerancy four years. Soon after his arrival, he wrote to Wesley:

We were not a little surprised to find Captain Webb in town, and a society of about a hundred members, who desire to be in close connection with you. This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes. I have preached several times, and the people flock to hear in multitudes. Sunday night I went out upon the common. I had the stage appointed for the horse-race for my pulpit, and I think between four and five thousand hearers, who heard with attention still as night. Blessed be God for field-preaching! When I began to talk of preaching at five o'clock in the morning, the people thought it would not answer in America; however, I resolved to try, and had a very good congregation.

Whitefield had been along there, and the people were used to field-preaching; and the reproach of Methodism had in a measure been taken away. Boardman was an amiable and holy man, and he, too, found the way partially prepared for him. Leaving his colleague to serve Philadelphia, he went to New York, and thence reported to head-quarters:

Coming to a large town on my way, and seeing a barrack, I asked a soldier if there were any Methodists belonging to it. "O yes," said he, "we are all Methodists; that is, we should all be glad to hear a Methodist preach." "Well," said I, "tell them in the barrack that a Methodist preacher, just come from England, intends to preach here to-night." He did so; and the inn was soon surrounded with soldiers. I asked, "Where do you think I can get a place to preach in?" (it being then dark). One of them said, "I will go and see if I can get the Presbyterian meeting-house." He did so; and soon returned to tell me he had prevailed, and that the bell was just going to ring to let all the town know. A great company soon got together, and seemed much affected.

Between these two cities the missionaries spent their time, frequently interchanging. "Brother Boardman and I," writes Pil-

moor, "are chiefly confined to the cities, and therefore cannot, at present, go much into the country, as we have more work upon our hands than we are able to perform."

In the fall of 1771, Asbury and Wright arrived and were joyfully received. A year later, Asbury was appointed Wesley's "General Assistant" in America, in place of Boardman. In June, 1773, Thomas Rankin and George Shadford came under convoy of Captain Webb. The former having seen more service, and coming fresh from the British Conference, with instructions for carrying on the work, superseded Asbury in office. Late in 1774 other laborers were added, Martin Rodda and James Dempster, whose story is soon told.

Thus had the American Circuit been supplied, in the course of six years, with eight preachers, drawn from the mother Conference. The war between the Colonies and the mother country, put an end to further supplies from that quarter; and it was nine years before such intercourse was resumed. How these men acquitted themselves, and how the cause prospered under them and others who were raised up to help them, will be considered.

As is generally the case, mistakes occurred in the choice of some of the missionaries. The best are not always to be had for a distant and difficult field; and the actual situation may develop an unfitness that no sagacity of the appointing power can foresee. The irregulars who preceded them, "on their own account," were lively, full of resources, and not easily daunted by dangers and difficulties. But at least half of the eight sent over in the regular way did not turn out to be "chosen vessels." The law of natural and spiritual selection is a mystery that eludes the wisest. If out of the family of Jesse, with eight sons, we get one David—it is well. If one Asbury or one Shadford is found in all who crossed and recrossed the Atlantic to evangelize America, the outlay is well repaid, and we ought to be thankful.

Dempster, a native of Edinburgh, was educated at that university. He was, like Rankin, one of the few Scotchmen who found their way into a Methodist Conference. Wesley never had much success in Scotland. He found "the generality of the people so wise that they needed no more knowledge, and so good that they needed no more religion;" a people, "the greatest part of whom hear much, know every thing, and feel nothing." Now and then he got a preacher from among them, and such was James Demp-

ster, who had been ten years an itinerant. Soon after coming to America, he connected himself with the Presbyterians, and lived and died with them. One of his sons became an eminent Methodist minister.\* In less than two years Rodda fled the country, because, as a royalist, he engaged in spreading the king's proclamation through his circuit in Delaware. Aided by slaves, he escaped to the British fleet, and returned. His conduct was a cause of trouble to his brethren who were left behind him, both preachers and people. He continued in the itinerancy in England three or four years, and then no more is seen of him.

Wright, after spending a year or two in the Southern provinces—part of the time in Norfolk—early in the year 1774 returned to England, by the advice of his brethren. After his return he continued in the Wesleyan itinerancy a few years, and then desisted from traveling. Boardman's letter from New York shows the spirit in which he prosecuted his work:

It pleases God to carry on his work amongst us. Within this month we have had a great awakening here. Many begin to believe the report, and to some the arm of the Lord is revealed. This last month we have had near thirty added to the Society, five of whom have received a clear sense of the pardoning love of God. We have in this city some of the best preachers (both in the English and Dutch churches) that are in America. Yet God works by whom he will work. I have lately been comforted by the death of some poor negroes, who have gone off the stage of time rejoicing in the God of their salvation.

The war approaching, he and his colleague left in 1774; and we trace his continued history in the Minutes for eight years, when the first American "Assistant" died suddenly in Ireland, and was carried by devout men of Cork, with mourning, to his burial. Pilmoor's subsequent career was checkered. Wesley failed to name him as one of the legal hundred in the "Deed of Declaration" registered in 1784; and in making up an episcopal government for America did not call for his services. He quit the Connection, returned to America, took orders in the Protestant Episcopal Church, and was rector of a church in New York, and later in Philadelphia. He became a Doctor of Divinity, had a love for Methodism to the last, and to the end of his long life subscribed to the Old Preachers' Fund. At the Conference of 1804, in John Street Church, says Wakely, a tall, dignified old gentleman came into the house, and walked to where Bishop Asbury was sitting. Asbury arose, shook hands with him, and then, in

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\* Dr. Dempster, who founded Biblical schools in Concord and in Evanston.

his own way, said, as he introduced him to the Conference, "This is Brother Pilmoor, who used to preach in this pulpit under the direction of Mr. Wesley." Pilmoor seemed a little embarrassed, and bowed respectfully, paid his annual subscription to the Preachers' Fund, and retired. It was a pity he left the Church of his early choice, as he had the heart and soul of a Methodist preacher, and much of the fire of the primitive itinerancy. The evangelical spirit produced through his instrumentality in the congregations over which he presided, and a correspondent attention to some of the peculiar means of grace which he introduced among them, continued to manifest themselves for a number of years after his death.

Thomas Rankin was a native of Dunbar. He had spent much time as the traveling companion of Wesley, and therefore came to America well acquainted with the doctrine and discipline which were to be taught and enforced. His awakening and conversion recalls the fact that, in the marching and countermarching of armies, primitive Methodism was spread by converted soldiers. Thus was it planted at Gibraltar and other points on the Continent. Rankin's experience is connected with this strange means of gospel propagandism:

A troop of dragoons came to Dunbar; among whom were ten or twelve pious men. As soon as they were settled in the place, they hired a room, and met together for prayer and hearing the word of God every morning and evening. I did not know then, but I have been informed since, that those men were part of the religious soldiers who used to meet with John Haime (the Methodist lay preacher) and others, in Germany. The news of soldiers meeting for prayer and praise, and reading the word of God, soon spread through the town; curiosity led many to attend their meetings, and I was one of that number. It pleased God to carry on the work of his grace in the souls of those in whom it was begun, and their number increased; so that a Society was formed, and class-meetings were established. At that time I did not understand the nature of class-meetings; and therefore was ready to listen to the foolish talking of those who said, "The soldiers had pardoned such and such a one, after they had confessed their sins to them."

He was now in condition to listen to an ambassador of God, whom hitherto, through prejudice, he had declined to hear. "It was about this time that I first heard that eminent servant of the Lord Jesus, Mr. George Whitefield. He was preaching his farewell sermon in the Orphan-house yard, in Edinburgh. I had often before had thoughts of hearing him, but so many things had been said to me of him that I was afraid I should be de-

ceived. I heard him with wonder and surprise, and had such a discovery of the plan of salvation as I had never known before. I remembered more of that sermon than of all the sermons I ever had heard; and had a discovery of the unsearchable riches of the grace of God in Christ Jesus, as also how a lost sinner was to come to God, and obtain mercy through the Redeemer." How he reached a clear conversion, he shall tell:

It was suggested to me: "Probably you are not one of the elect; and you may seek, and seek in vain." I tasted no pleasant food, my sleep departed from me, and my flesh wasted from my bones; till at last I sunk into despair. One morning I went into the garden, and sat down in a retired place, to mourn over my sad condition. I began to wrestle with God in an agony of prayer. I called out: "Lord, I have wrestled long, and have not yet prevailed; O let me now prevail!" The whole passage of Jacob's wrestling with the angel came into my mind; and I called out aloud, "I will not let thee go, unless thou bless me!" In a moment the cloud burst, and tears of love flowed from my eyes; when these words were applied to my soul, many times over, "And he blessed him there." They came with the Holy Ghost, and with much assurance; and my whole soul was overwhelmed with the presence of God. Every doubt of my acceptance was now gone, and all my fears fled away as the morning shades before the rising sun. I had the most distinct testimony that all my sins were forgiven through the blood of the covenant, and that I was a child of God, and an heir of eternal glory.

An interview of Thomas Rankin with Wesley ended by his sending him to a circuit to try him, and soon his call to preach was as clear to him as his conversion. Rankin came to America to set things in order, and to him belongs the distinction of convening and presiding over the first Annual Conference.\* The work of stationing the preachers and regulating the Societies had heretofore been done at Quarterly Conferences. He was not equal to the man whom he superseded at any point except it be that of personal piety. The largeness of things in the Old World made him unable to appreciate the day of small things in the New. His journal constantly reveals disappointment:

Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, we had our first little Conference. There were present seven preachers, besides Brothers Boardman and Pilmoor, who were to return to England. The amount of all the members in the different Societies did not exceed one thousand one hundred and sixty. From the wonderful accounts I had heard in England, and during our passage, I was led to think there

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\* The list of appointments of the Conference held in Philadelphia, July 14, 1773: "New York, Thomas Rankin (to change in four months); Philadelphia, George Shadford (to change in four months); New Jersey, John King, William Watters; Baltimore, Francis Asbury, Robert Strawbridge, Abraham Whitworth, Joseph Yearbry; Norfolk, Richard Wright; Petersburg, Robert Williams.

must be some thousands awakened, and joined as members of our Societies; but I was now convinced of the real truth. Some of the above number I also found, afterward, were not closely united to us. Indeed, our discipline was not properly attended to, except at Philadelphia and New York; and even in those places it was upon a decline.

Next year the Annual Conference again met in Philadelphia: "May 25 [1774].—Our little Conference began, and ended on Friday, the 27th. We proceeded in all things on the same plan as in England, which our Minutes will declare. Every thing considered, we had reason to bless God for what he had done in about ten months. Above a thousand members are added to the Societies, and most of these have found peace with God. We had now more than seventeen preachers."

And next year, we have a similar entry: "May 16.—The preachers came together from their different circuits, and next day we began our little Conference. We wanted all the advice and light we could obtain, respecting our conduct in the present critical situation of affairs. We had abundant reason to bless God for the increase of his work last year. We had above a thousand added to the different Societies, and they had increased to ten circuits. Our joy in God would have been abundantly more, had it not been for the preparations of war that now rung throughout this city [Philadelphia]."

Nothing seemed to come up to his expectations, but our rivers: "'The River Delaware, and Hudson's River, as well as the Susquehanna, are grand sights. If I had not crossed several large rivers before, I should have been surprised in crossing the Susquehanna. Where we crossed, I believe it was eight times broader than the River Thames at London bridge."

Stationed in New York and Philadelphia, he faithfully kept up the custom of preaching early in the morning of Sunday and in the evening, and attending "church" at midday, for hearing and receiving: "Sunday 26.—I preached in the morning at seven, and in the evening at the usual time. I found more liberty in the morning than I expected. After breakfast I went to St. Paul's, as I always have done, to public worship."

Like entries may be found in the journal of Asbury. When he was in New York, he says: "Lord's-day, 13.—I preached this morning to a considerable number of people. Mr. R. found his spirits raised, and was much comforted. In the afternoon Mr.

R[ankin], Captain W[ebb], and myself, went to St. Paul's Church, and received the sacrament. At night Mr. R. dispensed the word of truth with power. It reached the hearts of many, and they appeared to be much quickened."

When Rankin informed Asbury by letter of his purpose to return to England, the latter records his own purpose:

But I can by no means agree to leave such a field for gathering souls to Christ as we have in America. It would be an eternal dishonor to the Methodists, that we should all leave three thousand souls, who desire to commit themselves to our care; neither is it the part of a good shepherd to leave his flock in time of danger; therefore, I am determined, by the grace of God, not to leave them, let the consequence be what it may. Our friends here appear to be distressed above measure at the thoughts of being forsaken by the preachers. So I wrote my sentiments both to Mr. T. R. and Mr. G. S.

George Shadford was to Asbury as Jonathan to David. "So we are left alone," he writes to G. S., after Rankin sailed in 1777. T. R. was useful in the London and other circuits, and died at a good old age, peacefully and with the love of his brethren. There are evidences in Wesley's correspondence that T. R. had made representations to him not favorable to Asbury; indeed his recall from the American field had once been definitely determined on as the result. By losing Rankin, Asbury was saved to the new Republic which was struggling into existence. It was Asbury's misfortune as long as Wesley lived to be misrepresented to him by weak but well-meaning men whom he overshadowed, or by designing men whom he overruled. To the credit of Wesley's sagacity, notwithstanding the difficulty of obtaining correct information, "honest Francis Asbury" stood at the top with him, to the last.

George Shadford was born in Lincolnshire, 1739. His mother insisted on his saying his prayers every night and morning, at least; and sent him to be catechised by the minister every Sunday. At fourteen years of age his parents sent him to the bishop to be confirmed; and at sixteen they desired him to prepare to receive the sacrament. "For about a month before it," he says, "I retired from all vain company, prayed, and read alone; while the Spirit of God set home what I read to my heart. I wept much in secret, was ashamed of my past life, and thought I would never spend my time on Sundays as I had done. When I approached the table of the Lord, it appeared so awful to me that I was likely to fall down, as if I was going to the judgment.

seat of Christ. However, very soon my heart was melted down like wax before the fire. These good impressions continued about three months. So that I verily believe, had I been acquainted with the Methodists at that time, I should have soon found remission of sins, and peace with God. But I had not a single companion that feared God; all were light and trifling. Having none to guide or direct me, the devil soon persuaded me to take more liberty; and suggested that I had repented and reformed enough; that there was no need to be always so precise." He joined the militia, and, between the strivings of the Spirit and the wickedness of the camp, became very miserable:

I was often tempted this year to put an end to my life; for it was a year of sinning, and a year of misery. I was afraid to stand by a deep river, lest I should throw myself in. If I was on the edge of a great rock, I trembled, and thought I must cast myself down, and therefore was obliged to retreat suddenly. When I have been in the front gallery at church, I have many times been forced to withdraw backward, being horribly tempted to cast myself down headlong. It seemed as if Satan was permitted to wreak his malice upon me in an uncommon manner; but I was wonderfully preserved by an invisible hand, in the midst of such dreadful temptations. At other times, when at prayer, or walking alone meditating, God hath graciously given me to taste of the powers of the world to come.

Near the military encampment, the Methodists held an outdoor service; and without any good design, he and his companions went to see and hear:

I was much struck with his manner. He took out his hymn-book, and the people sung a hymn. After this he began to pray extempore in such a manner as I had never been used to. I thought it to be a most excellent prayer. After this he took his little Bible out of his pocket, read over his text, and put it into his pocket again. I marveled at this, and thought within myself, "Will he preach without a book too?" He began immediately to open the Scriptures; and compared spiritual things with spiritual, in such a light as I had never heard before. I did not suppose that he had studied either at Oxford or Cambridge; but something struck me, "This is the gift of God; this is the gift of God." The preacher spoke much against drunkenness, swearing, etc.; but I thought I was not much guilty of such sins. At last he spoke very closely against pleasure-takers, and proved that such were dead while they live. I thought, "If what he says be true, I am in a most dreadful condition." I thought again, "This must be true; for he proves it from the word of God." Immediately I found a kind of judgment-seat set up in my conscience, where I was tried, cast, and condemned; for I knew I had been seeking happiness in the pleasures of the world all my days, not in the Creator and Redeemer of my soul. I revolved over and over what I had heard, as I went from the preaching; and resolved, "If this be Methodist preaching, I will come again;" for I received more light from that single sermon than from all I ever heard in my life before.



When his enlistment as a soldier expired he returned home. "I have looked upon it as a kind providence that brought a Methodist farmer to the place of my nativity, while I was absent in the militia, who received the Methodist preachers, and had formed a little Society just ready for me when I got home." His conversion soon followed, for the farmer, one Sunday, gave notice as the people were leaving the "church," where the "minister" had discoursed, that a Methodist would preach in a meeting-house that evening, and Shadford went.

We had a full house, and several were greatly affected while he published his crucified Master. Toward the latter part of the sermon I trembled; I shook; I wept. I thought: "I cannot stand it; I shall fall down amidst all this people." O how gladly would I have been alone to weep! for I was tempted with shame. I stood guilty and condemned, like the publican in the temple. I cried out (so that others might hear, being pierced to the heart with the sword of the Spirit), "God be merciful to me a sinner!" No sooner had I expressed these words, but by the eye of faith (not with my bodily eyes) I saw Christ, my Advocate, at the right-hand of God, making intercession for me. I believed he loved me, and gave himself for me. The Lord filled my soul with divine love, as quick as lightning; so suddenly did the Lord, whom I sought, come to his temple. Immediately my eyes flowed with tears, and my heart with love. Tears of joy and sorrow ran mingled down my cheeks. O what sweet distress was this! I seemed as if I could weep my life away in tears of love.

Class-meeting led him out into social and public prayer, and soon he was an exhorter, trying to bring souls to Christ. But his greatest concern was for his father and mother, sister and brother, all strangers to God. He prayed for them, and must pray with them. "One night," says he, "I took courage to speak to them, in as humble a manner as I could, with respect to family prayer. I told them I believed they had brought us up in the fear of God as far as they knew; but we never had any family prayer. I added, 'If it is agreeable to you, I will endeavor to pray in the best manner I can.' On their consenting, we went into another room. I had not spoken many words in prayer before they were both in tears. So merciful was the Lord to my family that four of them were brought to God in a year."

Shadford was preaching in Yorkshire when he heard that his father was dying and hastened to his bedside: "He said to me: 'Son, I am glad to see thee; but I am going to leave thee; I am going to God; I am going to heaven.' I said, 'Father, are you sure of it?' 'Yes,' said he, 'I am sure of it. I know that my Redeemer liveth. Upward of four years ago the Lord pardoned

all my sins; and half a year ago he gave me that perfect love that casts out all fear. At present I feel a heaven within me. Surely this heaven below must lead to that heaven above.' ”

The Lord having owned his labors as an exhorter and local preacher, Wesley came into that part of the country and asked him if he was willing to give himself up wholly to the great work of saving souls from death. “I replied that it was my desire so to do. Accordingly, at the Bristol Conference following, I was appointed to labor in the west of Cornwall for the year 1768. This was a good year to me.” Every year was a good year where George Shadford labored; and it was a good thing for the American Circuit when he was sent to it in 1773. To its loss, he did not abide on this side the Atlantic. His labors were blessed in New York and Philadelphia, and in Delaware, but especially in Virginia, for the country suited him better than the towns. At this last appointment he was much dejected; but he continues:

I often felt much of this before a remarkable manifestation of the power and presence of God. In preaching and prayer the Lord strips and empties before he fills. I saw myself so vile and worthless as I cannot express; and wondered that God should employ me in his work. I was amazed when I first began to preach in Virginia; for I seldom preached a sermon but some were convinced and converted, often three or four at a time. I could scarcely believe them when they told me.

Once, coming to a stream he found the flood too high for him to reach the bridge. Going back half a mile to a planter's house, he was granted lodgings; man and wife and children and servants all ignorant of God. “If you will send out and gather the neighbors, I will preach.” The congregation were at first like wild-boars for roughness, but were subdued to tolerable order. Next day the man showed him across the stream, and went to his appointment with him, and wept under the sermon, and made him promise to preach again at his house. “In a short time,” says Shadford, “he and his wife became deep penitents, and soundly converted by the power of God. A very remarkable work began from that little circumstance; and before I left Virginia, there were sixty or seventy raised up in Society in that settlement. There were four traveling preachers that year in the circuit [Brunswick]. We added eighteen hundred members.”

By 1778 the pressure became intolerable. Shadford had an interview with Asbury, and by prayer and fasting they sought to know the will of God, whether to leave America or not. Shad-

ford said he was impressed that his mission here was at an end, and that he ought to go. "There must be something wrong," said Asbury, "for my conviction is just the opposite, that I ought to stay." "Nothing wrong," said Shadford. "You may be called to stay, and I may be called to go." They wept in each other's arms and parted; and so Asbury alone was left of all the preachers sent out from England.

Shadford resumed the circuit in England. The unction never departed from him. He began his ministry like Gideon, asking for sign upon sign; but the way of duty being plain, his consecration was complete, his path grew brighter and brighter, and at the end he triumphed gloriously. After becoming supernumerary, he had a hundred souls under his care as a class-leader. At an inspection of them by Jabez Bunting, it was found that "more than ninety were clear in their Christian experience, and many of them were living in the enjoyment of the perfect love of God." He found a good wife in his latter years, and had a competent livelihood. Afflicted in old age with blindness, he was restored to sight by a surgical operation. "You will have the pleasure," said the surgeon, "of seeing to use your knife and fork again." "Doctor," he replied, "I shall have a greater pleasure, that of seeing to read my Bible;" and the first use of his restored sight was to read the sacred pages—reading and weeping with inexpressible joy. At the age of seventy-eight, when informed by his physician that the disease under which he was then suffering would be fatal, "he broke out in rapture, exclaiming, 'Glory to God!'" "While he lay in view of an eternal world, and was asked if all was clear before him, he replied, 'I bless God it is;' and added, 'Victory, victory, through the blood of the Lamb!'"

The situation of Asbury and his companions, at the breaking out of the Revolutionary War, was sufficiently embarrassing, even in the absence of any provocation beyond their nationality and their spiritual vocation. The enmity which their doctrine excited, among bigoted sectaries and sinners, would be sure to make a sinister use of the fact that they were citizens of a foreign nation with which America was engaged in an unequal and desperate struggle. However prudent and blameless in conduct, they nevertheless must have been at a serious disadvantage in pursuing the itinerant ministry. But it was by the hand of Wesley himself—strangely enough—that the heaviest disability was

laid upon them. The British Government needed to propitiate public opinion to the course it was pursuing toward the Colonies, and for this purpose Dr. Samuel Johnson wrote his famous political tract, "Taxation no Tyranny." Wesley, with but a slight abridgment, adopted it, and issued his "Calm Address to the American Colonies" in the fall of 1775. It raised a storm about his ears; for a considerable party at home believed the Americans were just in their cause. Wesley's enemies, who had been worsted in the recent Calvinistic controversy, flew upon him furiously. Their charge of plagiarism was not without color, unless, as has been suggested, a mutual understanding existed between Johnson and himself. In a letter to Wesley, dated February 6, 1776, Johnson wrote: "I have thanks to return for the addition of your important suffrage to my argument on the American question. To have gained such a mind as yours may justly confirm me in my own opinion. What effect my paper has had upon the public I know not; but I have no reason to be discouraged. The lecturer was surely in the right who, though he saw his audience slinking away, refused to quit the chair while Plato staid."

All this fell very heavily upon those least able to bear it—the Wesleyan preachers and people in America. It may be said, in mitigation, that before this "Address to the Colonies," dissuading them from fighting for their cause and their grievances, Wesley had addressed a letter, in June, to Lord North, the Premier, and sent a copy of it to Dartmouth, the Colonial Secretary, dissuading them from war. We give an extract from this bold paper—this plea for peace with those who were able to make peace:

But waiving this, waiving all considerations of right and wrong, I ask, Is it common sense to use force toward the Americans? A letter now before me, which I received yesterday, says, "Four hundred of the regulars and forty of the militia were killed in the late skirmish." What a disproportion is this! And this is the first essay of raw men against regular troops. You see, my lord, whatever has been affirmed, these men will not be frightened; and it seems they will not be conquered so easily as was at first imagined. They will probably dispute every inch of ground, and, if they die, die sword in hand. Indeed, some of our valiant officers say, "Two thousand men will clear America of these rebels." No, nor twenty thousand, be they rebels or not, nor perhaps treble that number. They are as strong men as you; they are as valiant as you, if not abundantly more valiant, for they are one and all enthusiasts—enthusiasts for liberty. They are calm, deliberate enthusiasts; and we know how this principle breathes into softer souls stern love of war, and thirst of vengeance, and contempt of death. We know that men, animated with this spirit, will leap to a fire, or rush into a cannon's mouth.

"But they are divided amongst themselves." So you are informed by various letters and memorials. So, doubt not, was poor Rehoboam informed concerning the ten tribes. So, nearer our own times, was Philip informed concerning the people of the Netherlands. No, my lord, they are terribly united. The bulk of the people are so united that to speak a word in favor of the present English measures would almost endanger a man's life. Those who informed me of this, one of whom was with me last week, lately come from Philadelphia, are no sycophants; they say nothing to curry favor; they have nothing to gain or lose by me. But they speak with sorrow of heart what they have seen with their own eyes, and heard with their own ears.

These men think, one and all, be it right or wrong, that they are contending *pro aris et focis*; for their wives, children, and liberty. What an advantage have they herein over many that fight only for pay! none of whom care a straw for the cause wherein they are engaged; most of whom strongly disapprove of it. Have they not another considerable advantage? Is there occasion to recruit the troops? Their supplies are at hand, and all round about them. Ours are three thousand miles off! Are we then able to conquer the Americans, suppose they are left to themselves? Suppose all our neighbors should stand stock-still, and leave us and them to fight it out? But we are not sure of this.\*

This long and powerful letter reads like a history, rather than a prophecy, of the event. If there had been an ocean cable in that day, Lord North would hardly have consigned Wesley's letter to the official pigeon-hole before a dispatch reached him giving the details of the battle of Bunker Hill. Wesley was in possession of information on the whole subject which few men had. If he must interfere in a matter of so great moment—if, having the public ear, he must speak on the impending issue—then he is seen laying one hand on the arm of the Government, warning the men in power not to begin war, and holding out the other hand to the Colonies, pleading with them not to provoke war. Neither party took his advice. The extreme infelicity of the case was that, while the Letter to Lord North lay in the State archives for nearly a century—its very existence unknown except to the Premier and the Colonial Secretary—the "Address to the Colonies" was published by tens of thousands of copies, and fell with stunning weight upon the missionaries in America. Writ-

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\*The public is indebted to George Smith, F.A.S., author of the History of Wesleyan Methodism (1857), for a knowledge, though late, of this document. Speaking of the Letter to the Premier and the copy of it to Lord Dartmouth, he says: "The latter still exists in Wesley's handwriting; and the author was offered a sight of this document on his engaging not to publish it. This he respectfully declined; and afterward fortunately obtained a transcript of the one sent to Lord North, with full liberty to print it."

ing to them in March of the same year, how to behave in their critical situation, he said: "It is your part to be peace-makers; to be loving and tender to all; but to addict yourselves to no party. In spite of all solicitations, of rough or smooth words, say not one word against one or the other side." And in the same letter he gave this opinion: "There is now a probability that God will hear prayer, and turn the counsels of Ahithophel into foolishness. It is not unlikely that peace will be reëstablished between England and the Colonies."

That Methodism, known to be so closely associated with Wesley, survived, is to be attributed to the divinity that was in it. It had got hold upon the people, and an able corps of native-born preachers had been raised up to carry on the work that had been begun. Looking at matters from a prudential point of view, John Wesley made two huge and grievous blunders in his life: Marrying hastily and meddling with politics.

Asbury, struggling patiently, bravely, heroically, to stand his ground and save the cause, wrote in his journal in 1776: "I received an affectionate letter from Mr. Wesley, and am truly sorry that the venerable man ever dipped into the politics of America. My desire is to live in love and peace with all men; to do them no harm, but all the good I can." So fiercely the tempest raged that he was compelled to seek a retreat with his faithful friend Judge White, in Delaware, and to abide there, out of public labor and public view, for over a year. The enforced retirement was rich in study and devotion, and in labor within a limited sphere. Their recognized and providential leader, he kept up a communication with the preachers in all parts of the wide and distracted field; and when the fiercest of the storm of persecution was over, while war was yet raging, he came forth when it needed him most to guide American Methodism on its important mission. Let thanks be given to Him who still "leadeth Joseph like a flock."

[The biographical facts of this Chapter are mainly drawn from Sanford's *Memoirs of Wesley's Missionaries to America*.]

## CHAPTER XXIII.

Francis Asbury—His Preparation and Ministry—Troubles of Administration—Revival in the Old Brunswick Circuit—Devereux Jarratt—The Preachers Called Out—Watters, Dromgoole, Gatch, Bruce, Ellis, Ware, and their fellow-laborers.

FRANCIS ASBURY was born of peasant parentage in Staffordshire, four miles from Birmingham, England, in 1745. His parents had but two children, and the daughter dying in infancy was the means of turning the mother to a religious life. From his childhood Francis never “dared an oath or hazarded a lie,” though he confesses himself not free from other sins of youth. “The love of truth is not natural; but the habit of telling it,” he says, “I acquired very early; and so well was I taught that my conscience would never permit me to swear profanely. I learned from my parents a certain form of words for prayer, and I well remember my mother strongly urged my father to family reading and prayer; the singing of psalms was much practiced by them both. Sometimes I was much ridiculed, and called *Methodist parson*, because my mother invited any people who had the appearance of religion to her house. I was sent to school early, and began to read the Bible between six and seven years of age, and greatly delighted in the historical part of it. My school-master was a great churl, and used to beat me cruelly; this drove me to prayer, and it appeared to me that God was very near to me. My father, having but the one son, greatly desired to keep me at school, he cared not how long.”

In this design, however, he was disappointed; for the cruelty of the master gave the lad such a horror of school, he chose, when thirteen years old, to be apprenticed to business, at which he wrought six or seven years. He was awakened in his fourteenth year by the conversation and prayers of a pious man, not a Methodist, whom his mother invited to the humble hospitalities of her house:

I became very serious; reading a great deal—Whitefield and Cennick's Sermons, and every good book I could meet with. It was not long before I began to inquire of my mother who, where, what were the Methodists; she gave me a favorable account, and directed me to a person that could take me to Wednesbury to hear them. I soon found this was not the Church—but it was better. The people were so devout—men and women kneeling down, saying, “Amen.” Now, behold! the

were singing hymns—sweet sound! Why, strange to tell, the preacher had no prayer-book, and yet he prayed wonderfully! What was yet more extraordinary, the man took his text, and had no sermon-book; thought I, This is wonderful indeed! It is certainly a strange way, but the best way. He talked about confidence, assurance, etc.—of which all my flights and hopes fell short. I had no deep convictions, nor had I committed any deep known sins. At one sermon, some time after, my companion was powerfully wrought on; I was exceedingly grieved that I could not weep like him: yet I knew myself to be in a state of unbelief. On a certain time when we were praying in my father's barn, I believe the Lord pardoned my sins, and justified my soul; but my companions reasoned me out of this belief, saying, "Mr. Mather said a believer was as happy as if he was in heaven." I thought I was not as happy as I would be there, and gave up my confidence, and that for months; yet I was happy; free from guilt and fear, and had power over sin, and felt great inward joy. After this, we met for reading and prayer, and had large and good meetings, and were much persecuted, until the persons at whose houses we held them were afraid, and they were discontinued. I then held meetings frequently at my father's house, exhorting the people there, as also at Sutton-Cofields, and several souls professed to find peace through my labors. I met class awhile at Bromwick Heath, and met in band at Wednesbury. I had preached some months before I publicly appeared in the Methodist meeting-houses; when my labors became more public and extensive, some were amazed, not knowing how I had exercised elsewhere. Behold me now a local preacher; the humble and willing servant of any and of every preacher that called on me by night or by day, being ready, with hasty steps, to go far and wide to do good, visiting Derbyshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire, and indeed almost every place within my reach, for the sake of precious souls; preaching generally three, four, and five times a week, and at the same time pursuing my calling. I think when I was between twenty-one and twenty-two years of age I gave myself up to God and his work, after acting as a local preacher near the space of five years.

From the region in which Methodism was planted with most danger and difficulty, where the most furious mobs assailed preachers and people, the Lord will draw out and anoint a chosen vessel, to bear his name far hence, and give the hated doctrine to a continent. It was no sudden impulse, no uncalculated conclusion that brought Francis Asbury to our shores. He had been a traveling preacher four or five years when he went up to the Conference at Bristol in 1771. "Before this," he says, "I had felt for half a year strong intimations in my mind that I should visit America; which I laid before the Lord, being unwilling to do my own will, or to run before I was sent."

Volunteers were called for, and five responded and two were accepted. Asbury's account is: "I spoke my mind, and made an offer of myself. It was accepted by Mr. Wesley and others, who judged I had a call. From Bristol I went home to acquaint my



parents with my great undertaking, which I opened in as gentle a manner as possible. Though it was grievous to flesh and blood, they consented to let me go. My mother is one of the tenderest parents in the world; but I believe she was blessed in the present instance with Divine assistance to part with me." The unusual tears which his father shed smote sorely upon the preacher's heart when, years afterward, the news of his death reached him in the woods of America, where, constrained by the love of Christ, he was seeking wandering souls.

Bristol seems to have been, then, the point of missionary embarkation; and when his affecting leave-takings of parents and friends were over, Asbury found himself at the ship, without a penny. "Yet," he writes, "the Lord soon opened the hearts of friends, who supplied me with clothes and ten pounds; thus I found, by experience, that he will provide for those who trust in him." The ship sailed on the 4th of September. He had but two blankets for his bed, and slept with them on the hard boards during the voyage. "I want," he writes, "faith, courage, patience, meekness, love. When others suffer so much for their temporal interests, surely I may suffer a little for the glory of God and the good of souls. I feel my spirit bound to the New World, and my heart united to the people, though unknown; and have great cause to believe that I am not running before I am sent. The more troubles I meet with, the more convinced I am that I am doing the will of God. Asbury's *Adventures in England* are the Methodist's the direction of affairs and the appoint discipline they enforce subject to Wesley's supervision. Board in the world. Th into a subordinate position, and the itinerancy this discipline agurated. Asbury formed a circuit around Philadelphia to he had done around New York, taking in Chester and I will sogton, and sweeping into New Jersey. He wrote to Will-May then hearing one of his stirring reports: "I hope that before

About seven preachers of us will spread over seven or eight God dred miles."

my upon his new appointment, Asbury moved his head-quarters where the center of operations—Baltimore; he "settled" the Society er, b classes, and thus got for the members the benefit of closer was rsight and of better spiritual edification. Not content with try, rching at the market-place and in private houses, he moved much ne building of two churches—Fell's Point and Light Street

notes: "November 4.—We held a watch-night. Toward the end, a plain man spoke, who came out of the country, and his words went with great power to the souls of the people; so that we may say, 'Who hath despised the day of small things?' not the Lord our God; then why should self-important man?"

Moving on to New York, he preached his opening sermon in Embury's chapel on, "I determined not to know any thing among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." "I approved much," says he, "of the spirit of the people; they were loving and serious; there appeared also in some a love of discipline. Though I was unwilling to go to York so soon, I believe it is all well; and I still hope I am in the order of God."

Here he found Boardman, as he had left Pilmoor, settling down into winter-quarters; and we are not surprised at this item in his journal: "At present I am dissatisfied, and judge that we are to be shut up in the cities this winter. My brethren seem unwilling to leave the cities, but I think I shall show them the way." "I am come over with an upright intention, and through the grace of God I will make it appear, and am determined that no man shall bias me with soft words and fair speeches." "Whomsoever I please or displease, I will be faithful to God, to the people, and to my own soul." In pursuance of this design, he made an excursion to West Farms and to Westchester, preaching in court-houses, barns, and private houses. He spent the winter alternately in the city and country, extending his labors to New Rochelle, to Rye, and to Staten Island, where he preached at the houses of Van Pelt, Wright, and Disosway. Soon there were half a dozen preaching-places on the island. This was the beginning of Methodism there; and as in many other instances of sowing beside all waters, one event connects itself with another afar off. When Asbury, as Bishop, crossed the Blue Ridge, he found a brother of his old friend, Peter Van Pelt, in the French Broad country. An instant and most friendly alliance naturally followed their meeting, and Benjamin Van Pelt became a useful local preacher, formed several Societies, and built Van Pelt's Meeting-house—an ancient landmark of East Tennessee Methodism.

It was not long before Boardman was traveling North and East, as far as Boston; though he made little impression upon the New Englanders. Pilmoor went southward; from Norfolk, he extended his trip to Charleston and Savannah, and thence returned.

—the first of their kind in a city which has since enjoyed the eminence of being a city of Methodist churches. Here, as in New York and Philadelphia, he made the city a rallying-point from which to extend his labors. Beginning at Baltimore, he by no means confined his labors to that place, but traveled extensively through various parts of Maryland, preaching every day, forming into classes those who had been awakened to a sense of their sin and their danger, that they might help each other to work out their salvation. In December, having gone round that part of his circuit which lay on the Western Shore, he crossed the Susquehanna, in company with John King, to visit that part of it which lay on the Peninsula, between Chester River and Wilmington. His circuit lay in six counties. He traveled over it every three weeks, about twenty-four appointments—assisted by King, Strawbridge, Owen, and other preachers and exhorters. On the Eastern Shore of Maryland, particularly in the county of Kent, there was a revival of religion, by which many souls were brought to the “knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins.” Kent Circuit was reported the next year, with its meeting-house, the first on the Peninsula, which has continued a fruitful field for Methodism. The rafters prepared for the chapel were broken in the night by enemies; but the Society persisted and prevailed.

Asbury gives this adventure, on his visit to this point where Strawbridge and his exhorters had opened the way. It is a sample of the shepherds on whom the Methodists were dependent for the sacraments, while they continued to depend on the “clergy:”

December 12.—Went twelve miles into Kent county, and had many great people to hear me. Before preaching, one Mr. R., a Church minister, came to me and desired to know who I was, and whether I was licensed. I told him who I was. He spoke great swelling words, and told me he had authority over the people, and was charged with the care of their souls. He also told me that I could not and should not preach; and if I did, he would proceed against me according to law. I let him know that I came to preach, and preach I would; and further asked him if he had authority to bind the consciences of the people, or if he was a justice of the peace; and told him I thought he had nothing to do with me. He charged me with making a schism. I told him that I did not draw the people from the church; and asked him if his church was then open. He told me that I hindered the people from their work; but I asked him if fairs and horse-races did not hinder them. And further told him that I came to help him. He said, he had not hired an assistant, and did not want my help. I told him if there were no swearers or other sinners, he was sufficient. But said he, “What did you come for?” I replied, “To turn sinners to God.” He said, “Cannot I do this as well

as you?" I told him that I had authority from God. He then laughed at me, and said, "You are a fine fellow, indeed!" I told him I did not do this to invalidate his authority; and also gave him to understand that I did not wish to dispute with him; but he said he had business with *me*, and came into the house in a great rage. I began to preach, and urged the people to repent and turn from all their transgressions, so iniquity should not prove their ruin. After preaching, the parson went out, and told the people they did wrong in coming to hear me, and said I spoke against learning, whereas I only spoke to this purpose: when a man turned from all sin, he would adorn every character in life, both in Church and State.

Early in the spring he started North, wandering off the direct route right and left, with his gospel message, till he came to New York. "Trouble is at hand," writes Asbury, "but I cannot fear while my heart is upright with God. I seek nothing but him, and fear nothing but his displeasure."

On leaving the Southern Circuit he notes a fact which characterized his ministry: "Felt much power while preaching on perfect love. The more I speak on this subject, the more my soul is filled and drawn out in love. This doctrine has a great tendency to prevent people from settling on their lees." He had thoroughly accepted this Wesleyan doctrine, though up to this point there is no unequivocal record of his experience of it. He seems to have settled upon this view: That if a preacher is convinced of the truth of a doctrine he ought to preach it, whether he himself has personally experienced it or not; the gift of God and the privileges of believers are not to be measured by the attainments of the messenger, but by the terms of the message; the advice of Peter Böhler, on preaching faith, may be applied to Christian perfection—preach it until you have it, and then because you have it you will preach it.

Troubles of administration frequently arose—that plague in the planting of missions distant from the seat of authority—and Asbury had come to settle them. Pilmoor and Wright were highly displeased with him about something, and the gentle Boardman, like enough, did not relish the shaking-up that Asbury was giving to men and things. There was too much of military movement and drill to suit their views, and they as well as he were relieved by the coming of Thomas Rankin to supersede him. On hearing his successor's sermon, he made this note: "He will not be admired as a preacher; but as a disciplinarian, he will fill his place." Before T. R. left America, Asbury thought more of his preaching than of his administrative ability.

Conference at Philadelphia (1773) being concluded, Asbury, in a notice of its proceedings, gives this hint of the cause of his troubles: "There were some debates among the preachers in this Conference relative to the conduct of some who had manifested a desire to abide in the cities and live like gentlemen. Three years out of four have already been spent in the cities. It was also found that money had been wasted, improper leaders appointed, and many of our rules broken." Asbury was sent to Baltimore, where he finished what he had begun by putting Methodism on a firm footing, well organized in the city and in the strong centers within reach of it:

Asbury's usefulness in the Baltimore Circuit at this time had permanently important results. He gathered into the young Societies not a few of those influential families whose opulence and social position gave material strength to Methodism through much of its early history in that city, while their exemplary devotion helped to maintain its primitive purity and power. Henry Dorsey Gough and his family were distinguished examples. Gough possessed a fortune in lands and money amounting to more than three hundred thousand dollars. He had married a daughter of Governor Ridgeley. His country residence—Perry Hall, about twelve miles from the city—was "one of the most spacious and elegant in America at that time." But he was an unhappy man in the midst of his luxury. His wife had been deeply impressed by the Methodist preaching, but he forbade her to hear them again. While reveling with wine and gay companions, one evening, it was proposed that they should divert themselves by going together to a Methodist assembly. Asbury was the preacher, and no godless diversion could be found in his presence. "What nonsense have we heard to-night!" exclaimed one of the convivialists, as they returned. "No," replied Gough, startling them with sudden surprise; "what we have heard is the truth, the truth as it is in Jesus." "I will never hinder you again from hearing the Methodists," he said, as he entered his house and met his wife.\*

He was converted; both he and his wife joined the Methodists, and his house became a preaching-place and an asylum for the itinerants. A chapel was built contiguous to Perry Hall, and he built another chapel for the Methodists in a poor neighborhood. After some years Gough fell away, but under the ministry of Asbury was reclaimed in 1800. After his reclamation he exclaimed: "O if my wife had ever given way to the world I should have been lost! but her uniformly good life inspired me with the hope that I should one day be restored to the favor of God." He died in 1808, while the General Conference was in session in Baltimore. Asbury, who had twice led him to the cross, was

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\*Stevens's History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Vol. 1.

present to comfort him in his final trial. The Bishop describes him as "a man much respected and beloved; as a husband, a father, and a master, well worthy of imitation; his charities were as numerous as proper objects to a Christian were likely to make them; and the souls and the bodies were administered to in the manner of a Christian who remembered the precepts and followed the example of his Divine Master."

Asbury's journals have rendered the name of Perry Hall familiar. A veteran itinerant has drawn the picture of its Christian hospitalities:

We were received in their usual warm and affectionate way, and I was for the first time introduced to that dear household. I soon found that religion in its native simplicity dwelt in some great houses, and that some of the rich had been cast in the gospel mold, and came out in the image and likeness of their Lord. Perry Hall was the largest dwelling-house I had ever seen, and all of its arrangements, within and without, were tasteful and elegant, yet simplicity and utility seemed to be stamped upon the whole. The garden, orchards, and every thing else, were delightful indeed, and looked to me like an earthly paradise. But, what pleased me better than any thing else, I found a neat chapel attached to the house, with a small cupola, and a bell that could be heard all over the farm. In this chapel morning and evening prayers were offered to God. The bell rang about half an hour before prayer, when the manager and servants from the farm-house, and servants' quarters and garden, together with the inhabitants of the great mansion, repaired to the chapel. So large and well-regulated a family I never saw before.

If no minister were present, Mrs. Gough read a chapter and gave out a hymn which was sung by the negro servants, and she prayed. Asbury was poor, and he loved and lived with the poor and served them; but it was a feature of his character that without seeking the great or compromising with fashionable sins and vanities, he had the power of making homes where his Master made his grave—with the rich. He entered the house of many a Zaccheus, bringing salvation with him. There was a simplicity and genuine refinement in manners, an unfeigned warmth of heart, an unassumed dignity of person and presence, an impression of goodness and worth, that made people love and venerate him. Over the Middle and Southern States especially some of his far apart resting-places are familiar to the readers of his journal: Perry Hall, in Maryland; Bassett's and White's, in Delaware; Dromgoole's, in Virginia; Edmond Taylor's and Green Hill's, in North Carolina; Rembert Hall, in South Carolina; General Russell's, over the mountains.

Kindred spirits as well as neighboring fields brought Asbury and his co-laborers acquainted with Devereux Jarratt, of Bath Parish, Dinwiddie county, Virginia. If all the clergy had been like him, there would have been no Methodists; but he stood alone among the parish priests, with the exception of Archibald McRoberts, of Chesterfield, who, to complete the general abandonment of the field, in 1779 united himself with the Presbyterians.

Jarratt was a native of Virginia, born in 1732. He was sent to a plain school, and in the vacations divided his time between working on the farm and training race-horses and game-cocks. Occasionally he worked as a carpenter, which trade his father had followed before him. At nineteen he determined to be a teacher. Hearing of a situation in Albermarle county, he set out to find it, and was engaged at £9, 7s. per annum. The third year he taught in the family of a pious lady who greatly assisted him in his religious life. He now became deeply concerned about the salvation of his soul, and determined to take orders in the Established Church. Having saved sufficient money to pay his expenses, he sailed for England in the fall of 1762. He had to wait until the following spring before he received ordination.

Taking charge of his parish, he began to preach and to travel, and like the Methodists to put awakened souls into Societies. When he first administered the communion, only seven or eight of the more aged at church came forward to receive it; twelve years later, at three churches included in Bath Parish, there were a thousand communicants. This is Jarratt's description of his preaching at that time:

Instead of moral harangues, and advising my hearers in a cool, dispassionate manner to walk in the primrose paths of a decided, sublime, and elevated virtue, and not to travel the foul track of disgraceful vice (the favorite style of preaching in that day), I endeavored to enforce in the most alarming colors the guilt of sin, the entire depravity of human nature, the awful danger mankind are in, by nature and by practice, the tremendous curse to which they are obnoxious, and their utter inability to evade the sentence of the law and the stroke of divine justice by their own power, merit, or good works. Ignorance of the things of God, profaneness, and irreligion, then prevailed among all ranks and degrees; so that I doubt if even the form of godliness was to be found in any one family of this large and populous parish. I was a stranger to the people; my doctrines were quite new to them, and were neither preached nor believed by any other clergyman, so far as I could learn, throughout the province.

The usual result followed, and his evangelical labors were called

for in several counties, not without remonstrance from some of his brethren at his irregularities. When the Established clergy began to forsake the sinking ship, Jarratt stood at his post. He welcomed the Methodists and heartily coöperated with them, adopting their methods, and by administering the sacraments did all that one man could do to keep down their rising dissatisfaction about the ordinances. It is to be regretted that this good man, when the Methodist flock failed to be gathered into his fold, became alienated from them, and was led to speak and write depreciatingly of a Christian body which elected not to fall within his ecclesiastical lines. For awhile he not only labored with them and was blessed in his deed, but he bore their reproach. During the revival on Brunswick Circuit, in which Devereux Jarratt took so eminent a part, he attended a convention of his Church at Williamsburg, and was treated so unkindly, and heard the doctrines of Christianity so ridiculed, that he was minded to attend no more. In 1785 he was present at another in Richmond, but was so coldly received that he remained only a few hours and then rode home. He was better received at the convention of 1790, which elected their first bishop; at that of 1792 he preached the opening sermon. On his way home he was requested to take part in an ordination at Petersburg. In the examination he refused two of the candidates as unfit for the office. "But what did that avail?" says he. "Another clergyman was called in, and I had the mortification to *hear* both of them ordained the same day. I say *hear*, for it was a sight I did not wish to see." He sat in a pew in the corner, his head covered with his handkerchief. The Bishop's excuse was that "ministers were so scarce, we must not be too strict."

In 1775 George Shadford went to Brunswick Circuit with Dromgoole and Glendenning. The revival which had begun under Mr. Jarratt is best described by himself. How nearly he approached the Methodists, and how useful he found their means of grace, will appear from the account he sent to Wesley through Rankin:

In the years 1770 and 1771 we had a more considerable outpouring of the Spirit, at a place in my parish called White Oak. It was here first I formed the people into a Society, that they might assist and strengthen each other. The good effects of this were soon apparent. Convictions were deep and lasting; and not only knowledge but faith and love and holiness continually increased. In the year 1772 the revival was more considerable, and extended itself in some places



for fifty or sixty miles around. It increased still more in the following year, and several sinners were truly converted to God. In spring, 1774, it was more remarkable than ever. The word preached was attended with such energy that many were pierced to the heart. Tears fell plentifully from the eyes of the hearers, and some were constrained to cry out. The work increased in 1775, but was more considerable in January, 1776. It broke out nearly at the same time, at three places not far from each other. Two of these places are in my parish, the other in Amelia county, which had for many years been notorious for carelessness, profaneness, and immoralities of all kinds. Some time last year, one of my parish (now a local preacher) appointed some meetings among them, and after awhile induced a small number to join in Society. And though a few, if any of them, were believers, yet this was a means of preparing the way of the Lord.

As there were few converts in my parish last year [1775], I was sensible a change of preachers was wanting. This has often revived the work of God; and so it did at the present time. Last December, one of the Methodist preachers, Mr. S[hadford], preached several times at the three places above mentioned. He confirmed the doctrine I had long preached; and to many of them not in vain. And while their ears were opened by novelty, God set his word home upon their hearts. Many sinners were powerfully convinced, and "Mercy!" "Mercy!" was their cry. In January the news of convictions and conversions was common; and the people of God were inspired with new life and vigor by the happiness of others. But in a little time they were made thoroughly sensible that they themselves stood in need of a deeper work in their own hearts than they had yet experienced. And while those were panting and groaning for pardon, these were entreating God, with strong cries and tears, to save them from the remains of inbred sin, to "sanctify them throughout in spirit, soul, and body;" so to "circumcise their hearts" that they might "love God with all their hearts," and serve him with all their strength.

The outpouring of the Spirit which began here soon extended itself, more or less, through most of the circuit, which is regularly attended by the traveling preachers, and which takes in a circumference of between four and five hundred miles. The unhappy disputes between England and her Colonies, which just before had engrossed all our conversation, seemed now in most companies to be forgot, while things of far greater importance lay so near the heart.

One of the doctrines, as you know, which we particularly insist upon, is that of a present salvation; a salvation not only from the guilt and power but also from the root of sin; a cleansing from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, that we may perfect holiness in the fear of God; a going on to perfection, which we sometimes define by loving God with all our hearts. Several who had believed were deeply sensible of their want of this. I have seen both men and women, who had long been happy in a sense of God's pardoning love, as much convicted on account of the remains of sin in their hearts, and as much distressed for a total deliverance from them, as ever I saw any for justification. Their whole cry was:

"O that I now the rest might know,  
Believe and enter in!  
Now, Saviour, now the power bestow,  
And let me cease from sin!"

And I have been present when they believed that God answered this prayer,

and bestowed this blessing upon them. I have conversed with them several times since, and have found them thoroughly devoted to God. They all testify that they have received the gift instantaneously, and by simple faith. We have sundry witnesses of this perfect love who are above all suspicion.

This reads as if a Methodist had written it. Jarratt describes further how mourners were helped by class-meetings and love-feasts; how "in a moment the Lord spoke peace to their souls" and they rejoiced in the witness of the Spirit. "Where the greatest work was," he says, "where the greatest number of souls have been convinced and converted to God, there have been the most outcries, tremblings, convulsions, and all sorts of external signs. I took all the pains I could that these might be kept within bounds, that our good might not be evil spoken of. This I did, not by openly inveighing against them in the public assembly, but by private advices to local preachers and others, as opportunity would permit. This method had its desired effect, without putting a sword into the hands of the wicked." This revival of religion spread through fourteen counties in Virginia, and through old Bute and Halifax counties in North Carolina; at the same time, in several counties bordering upon Maryland.

Shadford carried up a glowing account to Conference, in May, 1776, at Baltimore, and Jarratt followed him with a joyful letter: "I praise God for his goodness, in so plentifully pouring out of his Spirit on men, women, and children. I believe threescore, in and near my parish, have believed, through grace, since the quarterly-meeting. Such a work I never saw with my eyes. Sometimes twelve, sometimes fifteen, find the Lord at one class-meeting. I am just returned from meeting two classes. Much of the power of God was in each. My dear partner is now happy in God her Saviour. I clap my hands exulting, and praise God. Blessed be the Lord, that ever he sent you and your brethren into this part of his vineyard!"

Asbury had been sent to a hard field that year. He found in Norfolk thirty persons in Society, with no regular class-meetings, and no place of worship but an "old, shattered play-house;" and twenty-seven in Portsmouth, who by discipline were soon reduced one-half. Like himself, he circled far and near, doing in the country what he failed to do in the two towns. With joy he took a laborious vacation in October. He writes: "I expect to go to Brunswick shortly, and my heart rejoices in hope of see

ing good days, and many souls brought to God in those parts." One week after: "I am now within a few miles of dear Brother George Shadford; my soul catches the holy fire already." And soon he had his brother Englishman in his arms and gave him "the holy kiss," and they joined hands and hearts in their loved employ.

Let us glance at the helpers raised up in America, upon whom devolved preaching the word and the extension of the work after the English missionaries were withdrawn. The Lord of the harvest wonderfully supplied their places.

William Watters was born in Baltimore county, 1751, and was converted in his twentieth year. His third sermon was preached in "Baltimore town," as he was being taken out into the itinerancy the next year, by Williams going toward the South. His account of himself and his times shows how promptly the pioneer preachers put their converts to work:

My conversion was (in that dark day and place) much talked of, as also my praying in a short time after without a book, which, to some, appeared a proof that there was a notable miracle wrought on me indeed. We had no regular preaching in those days, nor had there ever been but three Methodist preachers in Maryland—Williams, Strawbridge, and King—so that we were frequently for months with very little preaching, and then for weeks we had it frequently, but in one sense we were all preachers; the visible change that sinners could not but see, and many openly acknowledged, was a means of bringing them to seek the Lord. On the Lord's-day we commonly divided into little bands, and went out into different neighborhoods, wherever there was a door open to receive us—two, three, or four in company—and would sing our hymns, pray, read, talk to the people, and some soon began to add a word of exhortation. We were weak, but we lived in a dark day, and the Lord greatly owned our labors; for though we were not full of wisdom, we were blessed with a good degree of faith and power. The little flock was of one heart and mind, and the Lord spread the leaven of his grace from heart to heart, from house to house, and from one neighborhood to another; and though our gifts were very small, yet it was astonishing to see how rapidly the work spread all around, bearing down the little oppositions with which it met, as chaff before the wind. Many will praise God forever for our prayer-meetings. In many neighborhoods they soon became respectable, and were considerably attended to.\*

Two of Watters's brothers were converted through his instrumentality, one of them becoming a zealous local preacher, and later a traveling preacher. He was a meek and judicious man, and rendered valuable service by diffusing socially a healthful,

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\* "Christian Experience and Ministerial Labor of Wm. Watters." Drawn up by himself. Printed at Alexandria, 1806.

loving spirit, as well as by preaching. Such items as this, on the Sussex Circuit (1778), marked his ministry: "I did not get round the circuit the second time, before the Lord was graciously pleased to pour out his Spirit in a very unusual manner, just after I had been preaching, and was meeting the class. The windows of heaven were opened, and the Lord poured out such a blessing as our hearts were not able to contain. We were so filled with the love of God, and overawed with his divine majesty, that we lay prostrate at his footstool, scarcely able to rise from our knees for a considerable time, while there were strong cries and prayers from every part of the house for that 'perfect love which casteth out all fear that hath torment.'" He was not a great preacher; but, closing up a happy and prosperous year, he gives the key to his success: "The most glorious work that ever I beheld was in this circuit amongst believers. Scores professed to be sanctified unto the Lord. I could not be satisfied without pressing on Christians their privilege; and indeed I could not but remark that however able the speakers, if nothing of the sanctification of the Spirit was dwelt on, believers appeared not to be satisfied, and that however weak, if they from the fullness of their hearts and in faith exhorted believers to go on to perfection, the word was blessed."

The severest language we have found in all that is published by William Watters was (1806) in defense of his bishop: "But a greater charge than the love of power has been brought against Mr. Asbury (though I believe only by a few); even that of the love of money. I think a devil ought to blush (if it were possible) at such a charge."

To Richard Owen belongs the distinction of heading the long roll of American Methodist preachers. Watters, the first itinerant among them, thus speaks of him:

Though encumbered with a family, he often left wife and children and a comfortable living, and went into many distant parts, before we had any traveling preachers amongst us, and without fee or reward freely published that gospel to others which he had happily found to be the power of God unto his own salvation. And after we had regular circuit preachers amongst us, he as a local preacher was ever ready to fill up a gap; and by his continuing to go into neighborhoods where they had no preaching, he was often the means of opening the way for enlarging old or forming new circuits in different places. Several years before his dissolution, after his children were grown up and able to attend his family concerns, he gave himself up entirely to the work of the ministry, and finished his course in

Leesburg, Fairfax Circuit, in the midst of many kind friends, but some distance from his family.

Philip Gatch, connected with the best history of Methodism in both the East and the West, was born near Georgetown, Maryland, in 1751.\* He and Watters began their public labors as exhorters the same year, and they were the first two native Methodist preachers reported in the Minutes. He had early awakenings, but there was no one to take him by the hand and lead him to the fountain of life. From a child the Spirit of grace strove with him. "It pleased God," he says, "to send the gospel into our neighborhood in 1772, through the instrumentality of the Methodists. Nathan Perigau [a local preacher converted under Strawbridge] introduced Methodist preaching where I lived. I was near him when he opened the first meeting. His prayer alarmed me much. The sermon was accompanied to my understanding by the Holy Ghost. I was stripped of all self-righteousness. I saw myself altogether sinful and helpless, while the dread of hell seized my guilty conscience." Gatch heard Perigau again, and his trouble increased. He says:

On the 26th of April I attended a prayer-meeting. After remaining some time, I gave up all hopes, and left the house. I felt that I was too bad to remain where the people were worshipping God. At length a friend came out to me, and requested me to return to the meeting; believing him to be a good man, I returned with him, and, under the deepest exercise of mind, bowed myself before the Lord, and said in my heart, "If thou wilt give me power to call on thy name, how thankful will I be!" Immediately I felt the power of God to affect me, body and soul. I felt like crying aloud. God said, by his Spirit, to my soul, "My power is present to heal thy soul, if thou wilt but believe." I instantly submitted to the operation of the Spirit of God, and my poor soul was set at liberty. I felt as if I had got into a new world. I was certainly brought from hell's dark door, and made nigh unto God by the blood of Jesus. I was the first person known to shout in that part of the country. A grateful sense of the mercy and goodness of God to my poor soul overwhelmed me. I tasted, and saw that the Lord was good. Two others found peace the same evening, which made seven conversions in the neighborhood. I returned home happy in the love of God.

His father received him ungraciously. "There is your elder brother," the father had said to him, "he has better learning than you; if there is any thing good in it, why does he not find it out?" But this elder brother was "powerfully converted" at the same meeting with Philip. The brothers introduced family prayers,

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\*Sketch of Rev. Philip Gatch, prepared by Hon. John McLean, LL.D., Judge of the Supreme Court of the United States. Cincinnati, 1854.

and Philip Gatch's first exhortation was at home. "The Lord blessed me," he says, "with a spirit of prayer, and he made manifest his saving power among us. I rose from my knees and spoke to them some time, and it had a gracious effect upon the family. Thenceforward we attended to family prayer."

Perigau was soon preaching in the house. Classes were formed; Gatch's parents, most of their children, a brother-in-law and two sisters-in-law, were in a few weeks recorded among the class-members. "The work was great, for it was the work of God." Philip was soon exhorting, and then as a preacher he went to New Jersey, Virginia, and Maryland, feeble in frame, yet faithfully itinerating and preaching. His judgment, modesty, deep spirituality, and his courage, made him the man for difficult places. Whitworth and Ebert, two apostate preachers, had scandalized the cause on the Eastern Shore and in New Jersey, and within twelve months Gatch was sent to both places to recover the ground that had been lost. He succeeded, and the tide was turned. Gatch manumitted his slaves, and subsequently removed to Ohio, where he took part in the civil as well as religious organization of the territory, and was called Judge Gatch. His posterity are honorably known in Church and State. He died the same year with his old friend and comrade, Dromgoole.

Edward Dromgoole's name appears on the Conference list of 1774. A native of Sligo, he renounced popery before leaving his own land, and was brought to a saving knowledge of Christ in America; emigrated about 1770, and worked awhile with a Christian man as a journeyman tailor. After his family came to opulence and high social position, the thimble with which he wrought was preserved as a relic and heirloom. He heard his countryman, Strawbridge; was converted, and began to preach; and the next year was sent to Baltimore Circuit with Shadford and two other recruits. A native gift of oratory and an elevated and commanding character were developed during the next twelve years which he spent in the itinerancy. In Virginia, North Carolina, and Maryland, the fine results of his influence were wrought into the social and religious life of Methodism. Marrying, he located and made his home in Brunswick county; and died in 1835, in the eighty-fourth year of his age.

As a local preacher he was greatly useful. The blessing of God came upon his household, and he increased in worldly goods.

Mary Walton, his wife, a native of Brunswick, bore him ten children; and their happy union lasted forty-nine years. His numerous family, including many slaves, were brought under Christian influence, and his large hospitality was tested by the entertainment of a Conference. Asbury preached at his house so late as 1815, and ordained him an elder on that occasion. In 1813 he wrote to his fellow-laborer, Philip Gatch: "We are still living in old Brunswick, and nearly in the common way of the country. My five oldest children are professors, and in Society. Our youngest child is sixteen years of age. He is moral, but not a professor yet. May the Lord bring him into the fold! Two of my sons are preachers. I am yet endeavoring to labor in my Master's vineyard."

His youngest son was afterward a leading Congressman of that day;\* and his grandson was a member of the faculty that organized Lagrange College, Alabama, and subsequently held a professorship in Randolph-Macon College, Virginia. He went to Germany, and spent three years in travel and at the University of Halle, perfecting his studies in literature and science. He was filling a chair in the University of Alabama when he died in 1845, in his forty-first year. The Church lost in him one of her ripest scholars and one of her purest and most devoted ministers.†

Among the nine preachers added to the itinerant ranks of the Conference in 1776, there are names not to be forgotten.

Isham Tatum was for eight years a laborious pioneer in the new and hard fields of Virginia and North Carolina. He "desisted from traveling" in 1781. At the time of his death he was the oldest Methodist preacher in the United States, if not in the world. Freeborn Garrettson was born in Maryland, 1752. Awakened under the rough warning of an exhorter, he was converted in 1775, and became a burning and shining light. He inherited wealth, but manumitted his slaves. He traveled through all the Southern field with power; enduring persecution even to imprisonment and bloody wounds, like others of his brethren. He then volunteered for Nova Scotia, and labored there successfully; after

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\* Hon. Geo. C. Dromgoole.

† Prof. Edward D. Sims. He had given special attention to the Anglo-Saxon and all the dialects from which the English language is drawn. It is to be regretted that the material he collected for an Anglo-Saxon grammar, and which he was about publishing, has never been utilized.

which the State of New York was the scene of his apostolic labors. He died in his seventy-sixth year. To specify one more—Francis Poythress, a not less distinguished name, joined the itinerant ranks the same year. A native Virginian; he was converted under Jarratt's ministry, brought eminent ability to the service of Methodism, and was at one time desired by Asbury as his assistant and successor. In Kentucky he bore the banner for years, after a like ministry in the East.

The list of fourteen preachers admitted on trial into the Conference of 1777 is rich in historic names. John Tunnell, after preaching from New Jersey to Carolina, planted Methodism in the fertile Holston Conference, and was the first itinerant to make his grave within its boundaries. Reuben Ellis was one of the most judicious and useful of the wise master-builders who laid the foundations. Caleb Pedicord was eloquent in sermon and song. Le Roy Cole was attracted to "Methodism as the best exponent of Christianity," and although educated for the ministry in the Church of England, he hesitated not to embrace the sacrifices of an itinerant's life. He meekly bore contumely and wrong in his Master's cause, outlived it all, and retired for a time to the local ranks; but again entered the itinerancy, and did much to forward the cause of Methodism in the far West, whither he emigrated in 1808.

Besides these and other natives of the South, John Dickins—Asbury's countryman—was a man of mark. While on a circuit in North-Carolina, he helped him to plan for a Kingswood School in America, which "came out a college in the subscription printed by Dr. Coke." He aided in starting and putting into successful operation the "Book Concern," and by "his skill and fidelity as editor, inspector, and corrector of the press," enabled Methodism to lay wide and deep foundations for a Church literature. One said that it might be written on his tomb with truth: "Here lieth he who, in the cause of God, never feared or flattered man." For many years his son, Hon. Asbury Dickins, was clerk of the United States Senate, respected and trusted, and retained in office by all parties. Dickins had studied at Eton College, and was specially fitted to inaugurate a religious publishing house.

John Major and Richard Ivey appeared in 1778, and later Thomas Humphreys and Wm. Partridge. They responded when laborers were called for to possess South Carolina and Georgia.



Philip Bruce and John Easter were admitted into full connection, after two years' probation, in 1783. John Easter was the most powerful hortatory preacher of his day. Perhaps no man has ever been more honored of God in the conversion of souls. Thousands were brought to God under his ministry, and among them were some of the brightest lights of Methodism, both in the laity and in the ministry. William McKendree and Enoch George were the spiritual children of John Easter. He was a native of Mecklenburg, Virginia.

Philip Bruce was born in North Carolina, near King's Mountain, in 1755—descended from the Huguenots. The family name was De Bruise, but was corrupted into Bruce by a Scotch teacher from whom Philip received his education. He was the first of his family to become a Methodist. When a youth, the pioneer preachers reached the wild region of his home, and under their preaching many were brought to God, among them Philip Bruce. His parents were the first-fruits of his labors. In person he was tall and straight; very grave and dignified in his manners; his hair was worn long, his visage was thin, his complexion dark, and his eyes bright and piercing; his countenance was open and expressive; his features indicative of intellectual power. In the pulpit he was graceful and impressive. His sermons were usually short, but he excelled in the application. His appeals were often irresistible. In one of his episcopal tours Bishop Asbury as usual had sent ahead an appointment for preaching. The Bishop remarked: "Now, Philip, I intend to pile up the brush to-night, and you must set it on fire." Philip Bruce professed, preached, and exemplified sanctification. Like most of the early preachers, he never married. His wisdom in counsel caused the Church to use him in important situations.\*

In the same year, a class of nineteen was admitted on trial; and Jesse Lee, Thomas Ware, and William Phœbus were among them. Ware was a noble and consecrated man, and itinerated in the power of the Spirit from his native New Jersey, through the Carolinas and to Tennessee and Pennsylvania. Jesse Lee was late in entering the itinerancy, but he had not been idle as an exhorter and local preacher. His preaching and literary la-

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\* In old age he removed to Tennessee, and his grave is with kindred dust near Pulaski. He died in 1826—the oldest traveling preacher in the Methodist Episcopal Church, at the time, with the exception of Freeborn Garrettson.

bor and his planting Methodism in New England have made his memorial. The time would fail us to tell of Ira Ellis, and John Littlejohn, and John Haggerty, and Isaac Smith; of Wilson Lee, and James Haw, who broke ground as the first missionary to Kentucky; of Ignatius Pigman, and Jeremiah Lambert, and Nelson Reed, and Henry Willis, and David Abbott, and James Foster. They will come into view again. Such men were the gift of God. Their calling and sending forth could be from none other than the Lord of the harvest. Inured to toil and privation, consecrated and anointed, they were fit instruments, providentially prepared, for the era that was now beginning.

Had Joseph Benson been yielded, by the British Conference, to the appeals that were made for him, he would, by his learning and eloquence, have pleased the great cities; but he would also have ranked and superseded Asbury, who was infinitely better suited for the leadership American Methodism then needed. The "Calm Address," so much regretted at the time, cleared the continent of un-American influences, and left in the hands of a ministry to the manner born, and in thorough sympathy with the social and political institutions of the country, the formation of its most successful ecclesiastical institution.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

The Question of the Ordinances—Destitution—Clamor of the People for the Sacraments—Deferred Settlement—Temporary Division—The Concession for Peace—After Long Waiting—Prospect of Supply.

IN April, 1783, exactly eight years after the first blood was spilled at Lexington, peace was proclaimed to the American army by order of the commander-in-chief. The Conference which met the next month appointed two days for public thanksgiving for the peace established, and for "the revival of the work of God which had taken place among us." This year eleven new circuits were added, one of which is Cumberland and Holstein; and two old stations restored to the list which had for some years been left off—New York and Norfolk. There were now thirty-nine circuits in all, and eighty-five preachers to travel them. Besides the nineteen preachers admitted on trial this year, an increase of one thousand nine hundred and thirty-five members was reported—making a total of thirteen thousand seven hundred and forty.\* Other Christian denominations had decreased, and some had been well-nigh extinguished during the war, but Methodism had increased fivefold. Rocked in the cradle of revolution, it was hardy. With the new republic, it was ready for setting out upon its unexampled career.

The question of the ordinances cannot longer be postponed. We have seen how Strawbridge believed, and acted upon the belief, that under the circumstances his commission to preach, which he had received from the Lord Jesus, carried with it the authority to baptize also, and to give the Lord's Supper to those who had believed on Him, by his ministry. Though the first "rule" of the first Annual Conference seems absolute, as recorded in their brief Minutes, yet we learn from Asbury's note that it was adopted with the understanding that "no preacher in our Connection shall be permitted to administer the ordinances at this time except Mr. Strawbridge, and he under the particular direction of the Assistant."

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\*There were now but one thousand six hundred and twenty-three Methodists north of Mason and Dixon's line, twelve thousand one hundred and seventeen south of it. (Stevens's History, Vol. II.)

The people more and more clamored for the sacraments at the hands of their pastors. There were no Wesleys, Grimshaws, Piers, Perronets, Creightons, Fletchers, and other godly clergy, going in and out to supply this demand. Even the loose and immoral clergy of the Established Church were few and far between; and at the sound of war, being mostly foreigners, they deserted the country. Unless the kingdom of heaven were a close corporation, with the Bishop of London, three thousand miles away, at its head, these American Methodists could not see why they should be deprived of a whole gospel. They had a well-defined theological system, a pure discipline, a sound experience, a holy ministry, a compact organism, and an edifying Christian fellowship -- why must they wait on the pleasure of men who could not understand their distant situation, or sympathize with their wants, for the sacraments? Intelligent and serious people, thus conditioned, would be likely to appreciate the figment of apostolical succession, and the theory of ecclesiasticism that hangs on it, at its true worth. The trained conservatism of Wesleyan Methodists triumphed, though it bore hard upon them. They waited until all could be united in measures of relief, and until relief could come in regular order.

The Minutes do not show it, but the journals of the old preachers do, that this matter came up at all of the Annual Conferences. It was pressed in the fifth session held at Deer Creek, in Harford county, Maryland, 1777. Says one chronicler: "The question, 'What shall be done with respect to the ordinances?' was asked. 'Let the preachers pursue the old plan as from the beginning,' was the answer. It was further asked, 'What alteration may we make in our original plan?' And the answer was, 'Our next Conference will, if God permit, show us more clearly.'" It was debated, but the decision was suspended till the next Conference, which was appointed to be held in the following May in Leesburg, Virginia. Thomas Rankin presided over this session. It was his last, and doubtless he bore to Wesley a faithful account of the pressure on this subject: that "the exigence of necessity" was upon the American Methodists, which even in the estimation of such a Churchman as the "Judicious Hooker" would justly constrain them "to leave the usual ways which otherwise they would willingly keep." His words described and covered their case: "Howbeit, as the ordinary course is ordinarily in all

things to be observed, so it may be in some cases not unnecessary that we decline from the ordinary ways."

The sixth Annual Conference began at Leesburg, 1778. It was the first session held in that province, then comprising nearly two-thirds of the membership. Rankin had left; Asbury was in seclusion; and William Watters, the senior native itinerant, presided, though only twenty-seven years old. He says of the session:

Having no old preachers with us, we were as orphans bereft of our spiritual parents; but though young and inexperienced in business, the Lord looked graciously upon us, and had the uppermost seat in all our hearts, and of course in our meeting. It was also submitted to the consideration of this Conference whether in our present situation, of having but few ministers left in many of our parishes to administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, we should not administer them ourselves; for as yet we had not the ordinances among us, but were dependent on other denominations for them, some receiving them from the Presbyterians, but the greater part from the Church of England. In fact, we considered ourselves, at this time, as belonging to the Church of England. After much conversation on the subject, it was unanimously agreed to lay it over for the determination of the next Conference, to be held [in Fluvanna county] 19th of May.

Asbury, aware of the unwelcome fact that the next Conference would be one of action on the vexed question, called—at Judge White's in Delaware, where he enjoyed freedom from molestation—a *quasi* Conference of all the preachers north of the Potomac, in April, 1779; Watters, alone, from the southern side was with them. Anticipating the proceedings at Fluvanna, the question was asked, "Shall we guard against a separation from the Church direct or indirect?" and answered, "By all means." Asbury says: "As we had great reason to fear that our brethren to the southward were in danger of separating from us, we wrote them a soft, healing epistle." This "preparatory Conference," as Lee calls it, appointed its next session to be held at Baltimore. Watters bore the healing letter to the regular Conference in Fluvanna county, Virginia, convened at Brokenback Church, in May. When the postponed question, "Shall we administer the ordinances?" came up, it was decided in the affirmative. Philip Gatch presided, and his journal gives the conclusions reached, embodied in a series of questions and answers:

"What are our reasons for taking up the administration of the ordinances? Answer: Because the Episcopal Establishment is now dissolved, and, therefore, in almost all our circuits the members are without the ordinances."

Philip Gatch, Reuben Ellis, and James Foster were appointed a presbytery: "First, to administer the ordinances themselves; second, to authorize any other preacher or preachers, approved of by them, by the form of laying on of hands." After going through the usual schedule of business, the Conference adjourned to meet next year in Manakintown, Powhattan county, Virginia.

The new plan was put in operation at once. The committee ordained each other, and set apart other preachers, "that they might administer the holy ordinances of the Church of Christ." Their labors were greatly blessed, many souls were gathered into the Church, "and Christians were very lively in religion." Jesse Lee says: "The preachers thus ordained went forth preaching the gospel in their circuits as formerly, and administered the sacraments wherever they went, provided the people were willing to partake with them. Most of our preachers in the South fell in with this new plan; and as the leaders of the party were very zealous, and the greater part of them very pious men, the private members were influenced by them and pretty generally fell in with their measures; however, some of the old Methodists would not commune with them, but steadily adhered to their old customs. The preachers north of Virginia were opposed to this step, so hastily taken by their brethren in the South, and made a stand against it, believing that unless a stop could be put to this new mode of proceeding a separation would take place among the preachers and the people. There was great cause to fear a division, and both parties trembled for the ark of God, and shuddered at the thought of dividing the Church of Christ." A few preachers, who dissented from the action of the Conference, took their stations north of the Potomac, among those that agreed with them on this question.

Asbury left his retreat in Delaware, and met some of the preachers at Baltimore, on the 24th of April, and thus anticipated the Virginia session by two weeks. Freeborn Garrettson says: "The next Conference was appointed to be held at Manakintown, Virginia, May, 1780. Prior to this Conference we Northern preachers thought it expedient, for our own convenience, to hold one in Baltimore, at which Messrs. Asbury, Watters, and Garrettson were appointed as delegates to the Virginia Conference, to bring them back if possible to our original usages. The proposition that we made to them was that they should suspend the admin-

istration of the ordinances for one year; in the meanwhile we would consult Mr. Wesley, and in the following May we would have a union Conference in Baltimore, and abide by his judgment. To this proposal they unanimously agreed; and a letter, containing a circumstantial account of the case, written by John Dickins, was signed and sent to Mr. Wesley." Garrettson, one of the committee, tells in few words the result of a long and anxious negotiation. The ground was not yielded without a struggle—not of arguments, for the brethren administering the ordinances were satisfied with their position—but it was a struggle of entreaties and tears, of love and pleas for continued union. The opening breach was, at last, closed by the moderation of the sacramental party, who compromised on a reference of the whole subject, backed by such official statements of the case as had never before been made. Asbury spent the next year pretty much in North Carolina and Virginia with marked effect at conciliation and unity. He also wrote urgently to England.

A few years before, Jarratt had written to Wesley:

Virginia (the land of my nativity) has long groaned through a want of faithful ministers of the gospel. Many souls are perishing for lack of knowledge, many crying for the bread of life, and no man is found to break it to them. We have ninety-five parishes in the Colony, and all—except one—I believe, are supplied with clergymen. But alas! you well understand the rest. I know of but one clergyman of the Church of England [McRoberts] who appears to have the power and spirit of vital religion; for all seek their own, and not the things that are Christ's. Is not our situation, then, truly deplorable? And does it not call loudly upon the friends of Zion on your side the Atlantic to assist us? Many people here heartily join with me in returning our most grateful acknowledgments for the concern you have shown for us in sending so many preachers to the American Colonies. Cannot you do something more for us? Cannot you send us a minister of the Church of England, to be stationed in that one vacant parish I have mentioned? In all probability he would be of great service.

There is doubtless a connection between these foregoing things and the following passage of history: \* "Some friends had written to Mr. Wesley, desiring him to select a young man of piety, wisdom, and understanding, and send him out to America, ordained by one of the English bishops. Having a personal knowledge of Dr. Lowth, Bishop of London, Mr. Wesley asked this favor of him, and was refused. Thereupon, on August 10th, 1780, he wrote a long letter to the bishop, pointing out to him the great evil he had done to spiritual religion in America by that refusal. Be-

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\* Memorials of the Wesley Family, by Stevenson.

fore finishing his letter, Mr. Wesley thus plainly writes his mind: 'Your lordship did not see good to ordain the pious young man I recommended, but your lordship did see good to ordain and send into America other persons who knew something of Greek and Latin, but who knew no more of saving souls than of catching whales. In this respect I mourn for poor America.' " Wesley was trying to avoid innovation, and not to "leave the usual ways," but fortunately he was defeated in his half-measures.

The case of the Established Church, where Methodism most prevailed, was one of collapse, as repeatedly stated by its own historian: "When the Colonists first resorted to arms, Virginia, in her sixty-one counties, contained ninety-five parishes and ninety-one clergymen. When the contest was over, she came out of the war with twenty-three of her ninety-five parishes extinct or forsaken; and of the remaining seventy-two, thirty-four were destitute of ministerial services; while of her ninety-one clergymen, twenty-eight only remained who had lived through the storm. Of these twenty-eight, fifteen only had been enabled to continue in the churches which they supplied prior to the commencement of hostilities." And it was a serious question, far from being solved, whether the fragments of that Church could be gathered up and organized, and perpetuated on its own principles. There was not a bishop of its faith and order in America, and never had been. In May, 1785, a convention was held of what subsequently became the Protestant Episcopal Church, in Virginia, which said, "Since the year 1776 she hath been even without regular government;" and, "We have as yet no resources within ourselves for a succession of the ministry." \*

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\* The attention of the convention was called to the fact that soon after the recognition of Independence "application was made by some young American gentleman to the Bishop of London for orders. Difficulties arose from the operation of certain English statutes requiring of those ordained such engagements as Americans could not take consistently with the allegiance which they owed to their own country." Mr. Adams, then American minister at the Court of St. James, mentioned their case to the Danish minister; it was laid before the theological faculty of Denmark, and relief was offered from that quarter. But the historian informs us that the favor was not accepted at the time on account of the "feeling which was general amongst the Episcopalians throughout this country, that the consecration of American bishops and obtaining of holy orders were not to be sought out of England, until all prospect of obtaining them there should seem hopeless." Adams, a Congregationalist, doubtless had a vein of humor.



A general convention met in Philadelphia, in the fall of 1785, in which a tentative effort was made to form a liturgy and constitution and articles of faith; "it was also recommended by the convention to the several State conventions to elect suitable persons to be recommended to the prelates of England for consecration to the episcopate; and a committee was appointed to address the archbishops and bishops of England, requesting them to confer the episcopal character on such persons as might be elected."\* The spiritual lords of England took their time, and next year a reply was returned granting the request upon certain conditions, among which were: The Americans must insert the Nicene Creed in their liturgy—they had thrown it out, but they put it in again; and also restore the clause, "he descended into hell," in the Apostles' Creed.

New York and Pennsylvania, accordingly, got supplied with the "succession," in the persons of Drs. White and Provost. Dr. Madison went to England, and was consecrated in 1790. How prosperously things went on may be inferred from the fact that when his successor was elected, in 1814, it was done by a mere handful—hardly a quorum. "Seven clergymen were all that could be convened to transact the most important measure which our conventions are ever called on to perform; and this in a territory where once more than ten times seven regularly served at the altar. We look back farther still, and find the Church, after the lapse of two hundred years, numbering about as many ministers as she possessed at the close of the first eight years of her existence."†

It was not to be thought of that vigorous, growing, and evangelical Methodism should be tied on to this moribund body, which at the close of the war, and years afterward, was without organization and without a creed, and did not know how, when, or where it was to obtain a perpetuation of its feeble ministry.

The relations in which the Methodists stood to other Churches, existing before and through the war for independence, and not disrupted by its results, were equally unfavorable for the solution of the sacramental question. Presbyterians and Congregationalists would not baptize their children unless at least one of the parents professed faith in their doctrines, nor admit them to the communion-table unless they became members of their

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\*Hawks's Narrative of Events connected with the Rise and Progress of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia. †Ibid, page 246.

Church. Baptists were more rigid still, as they could fellowship none unless they had been baptized by immersion. To neither of these conditions could Methodists submit. Besides, by these denominations, they were regarded as shocking heretics, on account of their opposition to the Calvinistic doctrine of decrees and the final perseverance of the saints.

What shall the Methodists of America now do? We have seen their condition at the proclamation of peace. One more Conference-session brings them down to May, 1784; and adding the results of the year, they have about fifteen thousand members, and forty-six circuits served by eighty-four itinerant preachers. Prepared as they are for great achievements, it is clear they cannot go much farther without completing their ecclesiastical organization. God has bestowed on them all the gifts and graces necessary for the work of salvation; man would withhold from them the authority of its formal signs and seals. They have refrained from exercising that right which "the exigence of necessity," as interpreted by stringent exponents of ecclesiastical polity, would allow; all in deference to regular order and to the preservation of unity—waiting, as they were encouraged to do, for some provision to be made that would compass both. Political events, which none could foresee, have now been determined; the crisis is upon them; they cannot wait longer. They have been standing on a question of expediency, not of right; of regularity, not of validity. The most able and venerable of their itinerants may not, on account of a restraint they hold themselves under, baptize a child or any one of the hundreds of their converts; may not give the simple emblems of the atonement to the thousands of souls they daily feed with the bread of life. The pure word of God is preached, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; but no sacraments are administered, because the Bishop of London refuses to lay his hands on somebody's head! Must these fourscore pastors and fifteen thousand Christians wait indefinitely? Or must they disband? Surely Christian fetichism could not ask so much.

"Dispassionately looked at," says Isaac Taylor, "Wesleyan Methodism did not so much violate as it rendered an homage to the principle of Church order; for if it broke in upon things constituted with a violence that threatened to overthrow whatever might obstruct its course, it presently emerged from its own

confusion, and stood forth as a finished pattern of organization, and an eminent example of the prevalence and supremacy of *rules*. The enlightened adherents of ecclesiastical institutions might well persuade themselves to see in Methodism not, as they are wont, a horrible Vandalism, but the most emphatic recognition that has ever been made of the very core of Church principles, namely, that Christianity cannot subsist, does not develop its genuine powers (longer than for a moment), apart from an ecclesiastical organization."

This "homage to the principle of Church order," having been rendered, is destined soon to be repaid. What has been waited for and prepared for will, in a regular, primitive, and scriptural way, be obtained without any breach of unity, real or apparent; without any possible concession to a hierarchical heresy which had all along been disavowed; and at the same time showing that due respect to the principle of the ministerial transmission of Christian ordinances which was to guard Methodism in the future against the evils of radicalism and confusion. Wesley, long since satisfied of his right and power, as a Presbyter, to ordain preachers for the American Methodists, had hesitated to exercise that authority on the ground of expediency. Now he can say: "By a very uncommon train of providences, many of the provinces of North America are totally disjoined from the British Empire, and erected into independent States. The English Government has no authority over them, either civil or ecclesiastical." "No one either exercises or claims any ecclesiastical authority at all." And reciting the necessities of the situation, he concludes: "Here, therefore, my scruples are at an end; and I conceive myself at full liberty, as I violate no order and invade no man's right, by appointing and sending laborers into the harvest."

Let us return to the Old World, and bring up a chapter of history from that side.

## CHAPTER XXV.

Primitive Church Government—Philanthropy—The Sum of all Villainies—Book Reviews on Horseback—West India Missions Planted—Christian Perfection—A Scheme of Absorption—The Calvinistic Controversy—Fletcher's Checks—Deed of Declaration—John Fletcher—Thomas Coke—Ordinations for America.

JOHN WESLEY did much of his reading on horseback, when young, and in his carriage when old. Thus reading, he criticised and digested more books, in history, philosophy, and poetry, than most men get through with in the quiet of a library. Traveling five thousand miles a year, he could not afford to lose the time on the road. Leaving London for Bristol early in 1746, he read a book that had an effect upon his opinions and his life. Lord King was the nephew of the celebrated Locke, who left him a portion of his library. At the age of twenty-two (1691), he published "An Inquiry into the Constitution, Discipline, Unity, and Worship of the Primitive Church, that flourished three hundred years after Christ; faithfully collected out of the extant writings of those ages." He rose to be Lord High Chancellor of England, and died in 1734, in reputation for learning, virtue, and humanity. This book was Wesley's companion on his way to Bristol, and after reading it he wrote: "In spite of the vehement prejudice of my education, I was ready to believe that this was a fair and impartial draught; but if so, it would follow that bishops and presbyters are essentially of one order, and that originally every Christian congregation was a Church independent of all others."

Stillingfleet's "Irenicum," King's "Primitive Church," and enlargement by observation and reflection—as he associated continually with men who by every token had been "moved of the Holy Ghost to preach," and therefore were in the highest sense God's ministers and ambassadors—caused Wesley's opinions to undergo a change. The Conference of 1747 reveals this: The conversation one day proceeded to show, from the term "*church*" in the New Testament, that a national Church is "a merely political institution;" that the three orders of bishops, priests, and deacons generally obtained in the early ages of the Church; but

that uniformity of Church government is not taught in Holy Scripture, and was never attempted till the time of Constantine. One question, with its answer, expresses Wesley's opinion, and that of his coadjutors, on a subject that was coming forward:

"Question: In what age was the divine right of episcopacy first asserted in England? Answer: About the middle of Queen Elizabeth's reign. Till then all bishops and clergy in England continually allowed, and joined in, the ministrations of those who were not episcopally ordained."

In July, 1756, Wesley wrote: "I still believe the episcopal form of Church government to be scriptural and apostolical. I mean, well agreeing with the practice and writings of the apostles. But that it is *prescribed* in Scripture, I do not believe. This opinion, which I once zealously espoused, I have been heartily ashamed of, ever since I read Bishop Stillingfleet's 'Irenicon.' I think he has unanswerably proved that neither Christ nor his apostles *prescribe* any particular form of Church government, and that the plea of *divine right* for diocesan episcopacy was never heard of in the primitive Church." He preferred the Church of England, not because he thought it the only Church, but because, upon the whole, he thought it the best. The charm of apostolic succession is dispelled, so soon as he gets that venerable Romish fetich in position to be looked at through a dry light, and to be investigated as other subjects are investigated. Indeed, in reference to this, Wesley wrote (in 1761): "I never could see it proved; and I am persuaded I never shall." And later still was his well-known and oft-quoted utterance: "I firmly believe I am a scriptural *episcopos*, as much as any man in England, or in Europe. For the uninterrupted succession I know to be a fable, which no man ever did or can prove."

As a presbyter in authority, or a providential bishop, he employed preachers, and set them apart to the sacred office. It is true that it was several years before he began to use the imposition of hands; but that was a mere *circumstance*, not the *essence* of ministerial ordination. Richard Watson observes:

It has been generally supposed that Mr. Wesley did not consider his appointment of preachers without imposition of hands as an *ordination* to the ministry, but only as an irregular employment of laymen in the spiritual office of merely expounding the Scriptures in a case of moral necessity. This is not correct. They were not appointed to expound or preach merely, but were solemnly set apart to the pastoral office, as the Minutes of the Conferences show; nor were they regarded

by him as *layman*, except when in common parlance they were distinguished from the clergy of the Church; in which case he would have called any Dissenting minister a layman. The minutes sufficiently show that as to the Church of Christ at large, and as to his own Societies, he regarded the preachers, when fully devoted to the work, not as *laymen*, but as *spiritual* men, and *ministers*; men, as he says, "moved by the Holy Ghost" to preach the gospel, and who after trial were ordained to that and other branches of the pastoral office.

Wesley was a philanthropist. Whatever concerned humanity's welfare, body or soul, concerned him; and his strongest language is called forth by cruelty and oppression. Here is another of his book reviews along the road: "I read a very different book, published by an honest Quaker, on that execrable sum of all villainies, commonly called the Slave Trade. I read of nothing like it in the heathen world, whether ancient or modern; and it infinitely exceeds, in every instance of barbarity, whatever Christian slaves suffer in Mohammedan countries." Here are sentiments in advance of his time; for it was not until fifteen years after this that the "Society for the Suppression of the Slave Trade" was founded. One of the counts in the original indictment drawn by the Colonies, prefacing their Declaration of Independence, was that the English Government, headed by the king, persisted in this trade with all its iniquities, to the disgust and detriment of the American people; and the new Republic prohibited it, under the severest penalties. Wilberforce was coming forward into public life, and, pursuing the line of Wesley's protest, was to earn a place in Westminster Abbey. The visitor of to-day, walking through the aisles of that mausoleum of kings and statesmen and other great ones, may read an inscription on his tombstone ascribing to him the honor of saving his country from "the guilt and shame of the African slave trade."\*

Another book review on horseback shows that Wesley's sympathies were not confined to any race or color: "I read Mr. Bolt's account of the affairs in the East Indies—I suppose much the best that is extant. But what a scene is here opened! What consummate villains, what devils incarnate, were the managers there! What utter strangers to justice, mercy, and truth—to every sentiment of humanity! I believe no heathen history contains a parallel.

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\* The book which Wesley read is supposed to have been one written by Anthony Benezet (1762), a French Protestant, who, after being educated in England, became a Quaker in Philadelphia, and was Whitefield's host when there.

I remember none in all the annals of antiquity; not even the divine Cato or the virtuous Brutus plundered the provinces committed to their charge with such merciless cruelty as the English have plundered the desolated provinces of Indostan."

An interesting event, about 1760, is connected with negro missions. Nathaniel Gilbert, a wealthy planter of the West Indies, visited England; he had heard of Wesley, had read some of his publications, and his visit was in no small degree induced by a desire to make his personal acquaintance. This wish was realized, and he became a Methodist local preacher. An entry in Wesley's journal contains the germ of events: "In the morning, I preached in Mr. Gilbert's house. Two negro servants of his and a mulatto appear to be much awakened. Shall not His saving health be made known to all nations?" Subsequently, he writes: "I rode to Wandsworth, and baptized two negroes belonging to Mr. Gilbert, a gentleman lately come from Antigua. One of these is deeply convinced of sin; the other rejoices in God her Saviour, and is the first African Christian I have known. But shall not our Lord, in due time, have these heathens also 'for his inheritance?'" These were the first of a great multitude.

Nathaniel Gilbert, after spending two years in England, returned to his estate in Antigua. He was an educated and an able man, and for some years had been the speaker of the House of Assembly in Antigua. He fitted up a room, placed a pulpit in it, and was soon branded as a madman for preaching to his slaves. A Society was formed at St. John's, and Methodism was fairly started in the West Indian islands. Nathaniel Gilbert died in 1774, eleven years before the appointment of the first Methodist missionaries to Antigua, leaving behind him a Methodist Society of about two hundred members. "On what do you trust?" asked a friend. "On Christ crucified," was the quick response. "Have you peace with God?" He answered, "Unspeakable." "Have you no fear, no doubt?" "None," replied the dying man. Thus died the first West Indian Methodist. The Society was left in a forlorn condition. For several years they were without a minister, but were kept together by two negro women, who met them regularly, and prayed with them.

The Government wishing a ship-carpenter's service at St. John's dock-yard, sent out John Baxter in 1778. A class-leader and local preacher, Baxter soon found the little flock and began

to preach, and had the pleasure of addressing multitudes, and the still greater pleasure of seeing the work of God prosper in his hands. He persevered until the year 1783, when a Methodist chapel was erected—the first ever built in the torrid zone. Although Baxter had devoted only a portion of his time to the work, following his trade while preaching, yet in seven years after his arrival nearly two thousand persons had joined his Society. Such was the state of things when the first Wesleyan missionary arrived. On walking up the town of St. John's, he met Baxter in the street, on his way to the chapel to perform divine service, it being Christmas-day. Although personally strangers, their mutual joy on this unexpected meeting can be better conceived than described.

About 1763 a deep wave of revival passed over the Societies. The peculiar work of the Spirit seemed to be what St. Paul calls "the perfecting of the saints." Many were awakened and converted, but the work of sanctification engaged preachers and people in a special manner. Visiting Ireland in July, Wesley records: "I found three or four and forty in Dublin who seemed to enjoy the pure love of God. At least forty of these had been set at liberty within four months. Some others who had received the same blessing had removed to other parts. A larger number had found remission of sins." In September he was in the west of England, where he writes: "The more I converse with the believers in Cornwall, the more I am convinced that they have sustained great loss for want of hearing the doctrine of Christian perfection clearly and strongly enforced." The bare word, *perfection*, provoked criticism and jests on the part of some who should have known its Bible origin. To a doubting if not a backslidden preacher Wesley wrote at a later day:

Many think they are justified, and are not; but we cannot infer that none are justified. So neither, if many think they are "perfected in love," and are not, will it follow that none are so. Blessed be God, though we set a hundred enthusiasts aside, we are still "encompassed with a cloud of witnesses," who have testified, and do testify, in life and in death, that perfection which I have taught these forty years! This perfection cannot be a delusion, unless the Bible be a delusion too; I mean, loving God with all our hearts, and our neighbor as ourselves. I pin down all its opposers to this definition of it. No evasion! No shifting the question! Where is the delusion of this? Either you receive this love, or you do not. If you did, dare you call it a delusion? If you received any thing else, it does not at all affect the question.



In 1759 Wesley published "Thoughts on Christian Perfection." His sermon eighteen years before, on the same subject, thus opens: "There is scarce any expression in Holy Writ which has given more offense than this. The word *perfect* is what many cannot bear. The very sound of it is an abomination to them; and whosoever *preaches perfection* (as the phrase is), that it is attainable in this life, runs great hazard of being accounted by them worse than a heathen and a publican." \*

Proceeding to show in what sense Christians are perfect, and in what sense they are not perfect, he guards against the error of putting Christian perfection so high as to be unattainable, or so low as to allow of "infirmities," so called, which are really sins:

Christian perfection, therefore, does not imply (as some men seem to have imagined) an exemption either from ignorance, or mistake, or infirmities, or temptations. Indeed, it is only another term for holiness. They are two names for the same thing. Thus, every one that is holy is, in the Scripture sense, perfect. Yet we may observe, lastly, that neither in this respect is there any absolute perfection on earth. There is no *perfection of degrees*, as it is termed; none which does not admit of a continual increase. So that how much soever any man has attained, or in how high a degree soever he is perfect, he hath still need to "grow in grace," and daily to advance in the knowledge and love of God his Saviour.

This perfection is not like that of a tree which flourishes by the sap drawn from its own roots; it is rather like that of a branch, living and bearing fruit while united to the vine, but severed from it, is dried up and withered. The necessity of a Mediator is not excluded, as objectors allege, in their case who are perfected in love; for none feel their dependence on him, in his priestly office, as they do. Christ does not give this salvation separate from, but in and with, himself. Its essence is constant union of the soul with the Saviour. All deviations from the perfect law, whether caused by ignorance, inadvertence, or mistakes of judgment, need atonement. In a letter to a friend (1763), Wesley declares that he can say nothing on the subject of Christian perfection but what he has said already. Nevertheless, at her request, he is willing to add a few words more:

As to the word *perfection*, it is scriptural. Therefore, neither you nor I can in conscience object to it, unless we would send the Holy Ghost to school, and teach him to speak who made the tongue.

By *Christian* perfection I mean (as I have said again and again) the so loving God and our neighbor as to "rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in every

thing give thanks." He that experiences this is scripturally perfect. And if you do not, yet you may experience it; you surely will, if you follow hard after it, for the Scripture cannot be broken.

What, then, does their arguing prove who object against Christian perfection? Absolute or infallible perfection I never contended for; sinless perfection I do not contend for, seeing it is not scriptural. A perfection such as enables a person to fulfill the whole law, and so need not the merits of Christ, I do not acknowledge. I do now and always did protest against it.

But is there no sin in those who are perfect in love? I believe not; but, be that as it may, they feel none—no temper contrary to pure love, while they rejoice, pray, and give thanks continually. Whether sin is suspended or extinguished I will not dispute. It is enough that they feel nothing but love. This you allow we should daily press after; and this is all I contend for.

So important a doctrine came up in the earlier conversations of the Conference. An epitome of it, as held and taught by Wesleyans, may be found in their Minutes. It shows a disposition to approach all who advocate holiness as nearly as possible:

"Question: What is it to be sanctified? Answer: To be renewed in the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness.

"Question: Is faith the condition, or the instrument, of sanctification? Answer: It is both the condition and the instrument of it. When we begin to believe, then sanctification begins. And as faith increases, holiness increases, till we are created anew.

"Question: What is implied in being a perfect Christian? Answer: The loving the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our mind and soul and strength."

"Question: How much is allowed by our brethren who differ from us with regard to entire sanctification? Answer: They grant, (1) That every one must be entirely sanctified in the article of death. (2) That, till then, a believer daily grows in grace, comes nearer and nearer to perfection. (3) That we ought to be continually pressing after this, and to exhort all others so to do.

"Question: What do we allow to them? Answer: We grant, (1) That many of those who have died in the faith—yea, the greater part of those we have known—were not sanctified throughout, not made perfect in love, till a little before death. (2) That the term 'sanctified' is continually applied by St. Paul to all that were justified, were true believers. (3) That by this term alone he rarely (if ever) means saved from all sin. (4) That, consequently, it is not proper to use it in this sense, without adding the word 'wholly,' 'entirely,' or the like. (5) That the inspired writers almost continually speak of or to those who were justifi-

fied, but very rarely either of or to those who were wholly sanctified. (6) That, consequently, it behooves us to speak in public almost continually of the state of justification; but more rarely, at least in full and explicit terms, concerning entire sanctification.

“Question: What, then, is the point wherein we divide? Answer: It is this—whether we should expect to be saved from all sin before the article of death.

“Question: Is there any clear Scripture promise that God will save us from all sin? Answer: There is, ‘He shall redeem Israel from all his sins.’ And to this the apostle plainly refers in that exhortation, ‘Having these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.’ Equally clear and express is that ancient promise, ‘The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul.’

“Question: Does the New Testament afford any further ground for expecting to be saved from all sin? Answer: Undoubtedly it does, both in those prayers and commands which are equivalent to the strongest assertions.

“Question: What prayers do you mean? Answer: Prayers for entire sanctification, which, were there no such thing, would be mere mockery of God.

“Question: What command is there to the same effect? Answer: (1) ‘Be ye perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.’ (2) ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.’ But if the love of God fill all the heart, there can be no sin there.

“Question: But how does it appear that this is to be done before the article of death? Answer: From the very nature of a command, which is not given to the dead, but to the living. Therefore, ‘Thou shalt love God with all thy heart’ cannot mean thou shalt do this when thou diest, but while thou livest.

“Question: Does not the harshly preaching perfection tend to bring believers into a kind of bondage or slavish fear? Answer: It does. Therefore, we should always place it in the most amiable light, so that it may excite only hope, joy, and desire.”

A perilous crisis was encountered, but safely passed, when the absorption of Methodism was proposed. The proposition

came from friends, and it had this advantage—it seemed to take ground on which Wesley stood at an earlier stage of the religious movement. Walker of Truro, an evangelical and friendly clergyman, pushed this scheme. In a long letter, he details it:

After all these considerations, might not an expedient be found out which might correspond with the word of God and the Church of England, and, at the same time, both remove all objections and render the body of Methodists more useful? I have long and often thought of such a thing. My scheme is this: 1. That as many of the lay preachers as are fit for, and can be procured, ordination, be ordained. 2. That those who remain be not allowed to preach, but be set as inspectors over the Societies, and assistants to them. 3. That they be not moved from place to place, to the end they may be personally acquainted with all the members of such Societies. 4. That their business may be to purge and edify the Societies under their care, to the end that no person be continued a member whose conversation is not orderly and of good report.

If this should be made an objection, that hereby lay preachers would be prevented from preaching abroad, and so much good be put a stop to, I would suggest it to be inquired into, whether this lay preaching hath been so much to the honor or interest of religion or Methodism as may be supposed? I remember, when it first began, I said and thought lay preaching would be the ruin of Methodism.

Wesley replied at large, showing that the scheme would not work at all. Alluding to the arguments of Methodists who advocated bolder measures and open dissent, he says: “I will freely acknowledge that I cannot answer these arguments to my own satisfaction. As yet we have not taken one step farther than we were convinced was our bounden duty. It is from a full conviction of this that we have preached abroad, prayed *extempore*, formed Societies, and permitted preachers who were not episcopally ordained. And were we pressed on this side, were there no alternative allowed, we should judge it our bounden duty rather wholly to separate from the Church than to give up any one of these points; therefore, if we cannot stop a separation without stopping lay preachers, the case is clear, we cannot stop it at all.”

“Lay preachers” had given every token of being “moved by the Holy Ghost.” Must he stop them, because not *episcopally* ordained? He states the case to the rector of Truro: “What authority have I to forbid their doing what I believe God has called them to do? I apprehend, indeed, that there ought, if possible, to be both an outward and inward call to this work; yet, if one of the two be supposed wanting, I had rather want the outward than the inward call. I rejoice that I am called to

preach the gospel both by God and man. Yet, I acknowledge, I had rather have the Divine without the human than the human without the Divine call."

The next scheme was not so sweeping, but the more dangerous from its moderation. Wesley had addressed a circular to fifty clergymen, desiring their counsel and coöperation in carrying on the revival. "The great point," he says, "I now labored for was a good understanding with all our brethren of the clergy, who are heartily engaged in propagating vital religion." A dozen of the clergymen, to whom the circular had been sent, attended the Conference. John Pawson tells for what purpose. The reader must not be startled at the term *awakened* minister:

In the year 1764 twelve of those gentlemen attended our Conference in Bristol, in order to prevail with Mr. Wesley to withdraw the preachers from every parish where there was an awakened minister; and Mr. Charles Wesley honestly told us that if he was a settled minister in any particular place, we should not preach there. To whom Mr. Hampson replied, "I would preach there, and never ask your leave, and should have as good a right to do so as you would have." Mr. Charles Wesley's answer was in a strain of High-church eloquence indeed! but I leave it. His prediction was never accomplished, nor ever can be. However, these gentlemen failed in their attempt that time; Mr. Wesley would not give up his Societies to them."

The difference between the two Wesleys on this subject appears to have been this: With Charles, adherence to the Church was paramount; every thing else was of secondary importance. With John, the grand ruling idea was the salvation of sinners: and although anxious to remain in union with the Church, and to keep his Societies from separating from it, he subjected every thing to the proclamation of the gospel and the salvation of men. "Church or no Church," he observes in one of his letters to Charles, "we must attend to the work of saving souls." Besides other unanswerable objections to the withdrawing plan was this: There might, at one time, be a godly incumbent of a parish; but who could tell the character of his successor? Instead of taking care of the abandoned Societies, he might mock and destroy them. The successor of Grimshaw would not allow Wesley to occupy his pulpit. Such changes for the worse were common in a State Church, where the right of presentation to the vacant parish was a property often held by godless men.

Methodism, step by step, was forced into its true position. It must not be stopped; it could not be absorbed into the Establish-

ment at this stage; and the experience of Lady Huntingdon had shown that it would not be allowed, as a self-governed revival organization, to exist inside the Establishment. Already Wesleyan chapels and preachers were under necessity of getting licensed according to the Act of Toleration. Nothing was left, if Methodism be true to God and its mission, but to organize outside of the Establishment. If it cannot act as a leaven within that body, it may be an uplifting lever outside of it. In the course of time the hierarchy saw the blunder they had committed, but they saw it too late.

Kingswood School still gave trouble. In March, 1766, on his long journey to the north, coming to Bristol, Wesley wrote: "I rode to Kingswood, and having told my whole mind to the masters and servants, spoke to the children in a far stronger manner than ever I did before. I will kill or cure. I will have one or the other; a Christian school or none at all." At another time he resolved to "mend it or end it." His latter years were cheered by success; on coming to this child of his love, he could say: "I found the school in excellent order. It is now one of the pleasantest spots in England. I found all things just according to my desire; the rules being well observed, and the whole behavior of the children showing that they were now managed with the wisdom that cometh from above." At his last visit, he wrote: "I went over to Kingswood; sweet recess! where every thing is now just as I wish."

There was a well-meant effort by Wesley to keep as near to Whitefield as possible, when a doctrinal divergence began to appear between them. Antinomianism, both of mystic and Calvinistic origin, gave him trouble; but his testimony against it was unsparing. The Minutes of 1770 contained, therefore, the following passages:

We said, in 1744, "We have leaned too much toward Calvinism." Wherein?

With regard to man's faithfulness. Our Lord himself taught us to use the expression. And we ought never to be ashamed of it. We ought steadily to assert, on his authority, that if a man is not "faithful in the unrighteous mammon," God will not give "him the true riches."

We have received it as a maxim that "a man is to do nothing in order to justification." Nothing can be more false. Whoever desires to find favor with God should "cease from evil, and learn to do well." Whoever repents should do "works meet for repentance." And if this is not in order to find favor, what does he do them for?

Does not talking of a justified or a sanctified state tend to mislead men? almost naturally leading them to trust in what was done in one moment? Whereas we are every hour and every moment pleasing or displeasing to God, "according to our works;" according to the whole of our inward tempers, and our outward behavior.

These expressions, with others touching the acceptance of the heathen who "fear God and work righteousness," excited suspicion among some who held "the doctrines of grace." The Calvinistic wing of Methodism took up the matter warmly. The outcry of heresy was raised, as though Wesley and his preachers had asserted that we are saved by the merit of works and not entirely by that of Christ. The Countess of Huntingdon was alarmed; and the Rev. Walter Shirley, her kinsman and chaplain, wrote a "Circular Letter" to all the serious clergy, inviting them to go in a body to the ensuing Conference, and "insist upon a formal recantation of the said Minutes, and in case of a refusal, to sign and publish their protest against them." He and a few others accordingly attended the Bristol Conference (1771), where, says Wesley, "we had more preachers than usual, in consequence of Mr. Shirley's 'Circular Letter.' At ten on Thursday morning he came, with nine or ten of his friends. We conversed freely for about two hours; and I believe they were satisfied that we were not such 'dreadful heretics' as they imagined, but were tolerably sound in the faith."

As evangelical co-laborers, the Calvinistic Methodists were entitled to an explanation (not a "recantation"); but they did not get it until they approached the Conference respectfully. Shirley's "Circular Letter" was naturally resented by Wesley, as being published before any explanations respecting the Minutes had been asked; and also from its assuming that he and the clergy who might obey his summons had the right to come into the Conference, and to demand a recantation. This led Lady Huntingdon and Mr. Shirley to address explanatory letters to Mr. Wesley. The evening before the Conference met, Lady Huntingdon says: "As you and your friends, and many others, have objected to the mode of the application to you in Conference, as an arbitrary way of proceeding, we wish to retract what a more deliberate consideration might have prevented," etc. Mr. Shirley's letter acknowledges "that the 'Circular' was too hastily drawn up, and improperly expressed; and, therefore, for the offensive expressions in it we desire we may be hereby unde-

stood to make a very suitable submission to you." On this explanation, Mr. Shirley and his friends were invited by Wesley to come to the Conference on the third day of its sitting. The substance of the explanation was: "Whereas the doctrinal points in the Minutes of a Conference, held in London, August 7, 1770, have been understood to favor 'justification by works,' now the Rev. John Wesley and others, assembled in Conference, do declare that we had no such meaning, and that we abhor the doctrine of 'justification by works' as a most perilous and abominable doctrine." And the reply was that the "declaration has convinced Mr. Shirley he had mistaken the meaning of the doctrinal points in the Minutes of the Conference held in London, August 7, 1770."

Out of this affair grew a memorable controversy that ran through years. The literature of it is a permanent and rich contribution to the theology of Arminian Methodism. John Fletcher came forward as the defender of Wesley. He issued "The First Check to Antinomianism;" but he did not content himself with defending the doctrinal consistency and orthodoxy of Wesley, so far merely as the Minutes were concerned. He thoroughly discussed various other points of the quinquarticular controversy; and he, as well as Wesley, was quickly assailed by a number of replies, not couched in elegant or fraternal language.\*

Richard Watson thus sums up and estimates the result of the controversy:

Mr. Fletcher's skill and admirable temper so fully fitted him to conduct the dispute which had arisen that Mr. Wesley left the contest chiefly to him, and calmly pursued his labors; and the whole issued in a series of publications, from the pen of the Vicar of Madeley, which, as a whole, can scarcely be too highly praised or valued. While the language endures, they will effectually operate as checks to Antinomianism in every subtle form which it may assume; and present the pure and beautiful system of evangelical truth, as well guarded on the other hand against Pelagian self-sufficiency. The Rev. Augustus Toplady, Mr. (afterward Sir Richard) Hill, and his brother, the Rev. Rowland Hill, with the Rev. John Berridge, were his principal antagonists; but his learning, his acuteness, his brilliant talent at illustrating an argument, and, above all, the hallowed spirit in which he conducted the controversy, gave him a mighty superiority over his opponents; and, although there will be a difference of opinion, according to the sys-

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\* This abusive style the Calvinists even of that day disapproved of. Rowland Hill appears to have incurred the displeasure of some of his brethren; for, in a second edition of his "Gentle Strictures," he explains himself—lamely enough—that when he called Wesley "wretch," and "miscreant," they must remember that "wretch" means "an unhappy person," and "miscreant," "one whose belief is wrong!"



tems which different readers have adopted, as to the side on which the victory of argument remains, there can be none as to which bore away the prize of temper.

This controversy, painful as it was in many respects, and the cause of much unhallowed joy to the profane wits of the day, who were not a little gratified at this exhibition of what they termed "spiritual gladiatorship," has been productive of important consequences in this country. It showed to the pious and moderate Calvinists how well the richest views of evangelical truth could be united with Arminianism; and it effected, by its bold and fearless exhibition of the logical consequences of the doctrines of the decrees, much greater moderation in those who still admitted them, and gave birth to some softened modifications of Calvinism in the age that followed—an effect which has remained to this day. The disputes on these subjects have, since that time, been less frequent, and more temperate; nor have good men so much labored to depart to the greatest distance from each other as to find a ground on which they could make the nearest approaches. This has been especially the case between the Methodists and evangelical Dissenters. Of Calvinism, since the period of this controversy, the Methodist preachers and Societies have been in no danger; so powerful and complete was its effect upon them. At no Conference, since that of 1770, has it been necessary again to ask, "Wherein have we leaned too much to Calvinism?"

In the "Short History of the People called Methodists," Wesley says: "March 13, 1757, finding myself weak at Snowfields, I prayed that God, if he saw good, would send me help at the chapels. He did so. As soon as I had done preaching Mr. Fletcher came, who had just then been ordained priest, and hastened to the chapel on purpose to assist me, as he supposed me to be alone. How wonderful are the ways of God! When my bodily strength failed, and no clergyman in England was able and willing to assist me, he sent me help from the mountains of Switzerland; and a helpmeet for me in every respect. Where could I have found such another?"

John William de la Flechere was born in Nyon, in 1729, descended of a noble Savoyard family. Religiously inclined from his youth, he was designed by his parents for the Church. He won distinguished success in the University of Geneva, but abandoned his intention of entering the ministry, feeling unable conscientiously to subscribe to the Calvinistic doctrines of the Church of his country. His purpose was turned to a military life; but disappointed therein, he came to England, and engaged as a tutor in a family whose winters were spent in London, where he heard the gospel to his conviction and conversion. He joined a Methodist class in London, and continued for some time in the metropolis assisting Wesley, and preaching and administering the Lord's Supper at Lady Huntingdon's mansion. The patron,

in whose family he had been tutor, offered him the living of Dunham—parish small, labor light, and income good (£400). But Fletcher had preached several times in the populous parish of Madeley, and had conceived such sympathy for its wretched inhabitants that he declined the offer of Dunham as affording “too much money and too little work.” His patron gave Dunham to the Vicar of Madeley, and secured the latter for him, with more work and less pay. He thus became settled in the obscure parish which his name has rendered familiar to the Protestant world. It was a region of mines and manufactures, with debased population, and small congregation. For months he went about his parish on the Sabbath morning, with bell in hand, to awake such as excused their neglect of worship by alleging that they could not wake early enough to prepare their families for the service.

With Wesley he counseled and coöperated, while maintaining the independent position of his vicarage: this gave great advantage to his defenses of Wesleyan doctrine and polity. On the breaking out of the Calvinistic controversy, Lady Huntingdon dismissed Benson, the head of Trevecca College, because he did not believe the doctrine of absolute predestination. Fletcher wrote her that he did hold “the possibility of salvation for all men. If this is what you call Mr. Wesley’s opinion and Arminianism, and if every Arminian must quit the college, I am actually discharged; for, in my present view of things, I must hold that sentiment if I believe that the Bible is true and that God is love.” And he resigned the presidency of the college. In the controversy that followed, his saintliness of character was admitted even by opponents. Speaking of a call he made on Fletcher during this discussion, a visitor remarks, “I went to see a man with one foot in the grave, but found him with one foot in *heaven*.” As he entered the parsonage twenty years after, Berridge ran and took him in his arms, exclaiming: “My dear brother, this is indeed a satisfaction I never expected! How could we write against each other, when we both aim at the same thing, the glory of God and the good of souls?”

Wesley desired Fletcher, his coadjutor, to be his successor also; but his health gave way, and he modestly doubted his own fitness for such a heavy care. He was married in 1781 to Mary Bosanquet, and thus two saintly lives were given, in one volume, to Christian biography. His death occurred four years afterward.

The year the health of John Fletcher failed, Wesley formed an acquaintance with Thomas Coke. Born and educated at Brecon, Wales, Coke was now twenty-nine years of age. He had taken his degrees at Oxford, had received episcopal ordination, and was curate at South Petherton. A friend loaned him the sermons and journals of Wesley, and the "Checks" of Fletcher. These books were, to use his own words, "the blessed means of bringing me among the despised people called Methodists, with whom, God being my helper, I am determined to live and die." Wesley writes: "1776, August 13.—I preached at Taunton, and afterward went with Mr. Brown to Kingston. Here I found a clergyman, Dr. Coke, late a gentleman commoner of Jesus College, Oxford, who came twenty miles on purpose to meet me. I had much conversation with him; and a union then began which, I trust, shall never end." Thomas Maxfield, who, having obtained ordination, had left Wesley and was pastor of an Independent congregation near Petherton, was useful to the awakened curate in explaining to him the way of salvation. Another circumstance happened at this time that greatly assisted Dr. Coke in obtaining peace of mind. He had occasion to visit a wealthy family in Devonshire, and among the laborers employed there was a pious man, a member of the Methodist Society, who was the leader of a small class. The Doctor found him out, and they conversed very freely on the nature of pardon and the evidences that accompany it, the witness of the Spirit, and the manner in which we must come to God. After conversation they joined in prayer, and were so united in spirit that Dr. Coke wished to know something more about the Methodists, of whom he had heard so many strange reports.

From the pulpit he soon announced the blessing he had experienced, and his language partook of the fervor of his spirit. His custom of reading sermons was succeeded by the more natural and appropriate practice of preaching extemporaneously. God was pleased to acknowledge his servant, by attending his word with a peculiar unction, and under his first extemporary sermon three souls were awakened. Preaching without a book, the earnestness of his exhortations, the plainness of his reproofs, and his establishing evening lectures in the village, all conspired to give offense, and to create a general ferment in the parish. As he had introduced into the church the practice of singing

hymns, the choir was greatly disgusted, and all parties joined in the clamor against him. The rector dismissed him with every circumstance of indignity, and to complete the triumph of his enemies the parish bells chimed out the curate who had been dubbed a Methodist.

At the Conference of 1778, Thomas Coke was stationed in London. The report of his conversion, of his energetic preaching, and his ill treatment at Petherton, reached London before his appointment there, and excited strong prepossession in his favor. His popularity in London was great, his congregations large, and the Lord owned and blessed his labors with success. In the year 1780 Coke began to travel extensively, under the direction of Wesley, visiting and regulating the Societies; and from this time he continued traveling almost incessantly, by land or water, until death ended his earthly career. In the course of his journeyings he visited Petherton. During his absence, time had wrought a change in the disposition of the inhabitants and procured for him a gratifying reception. "Well," said some of his former opponents, "we *chimed* him out, and now we will atone for our error by *ringing* him in."

From the increase of the Societies in Ireland, Wesley judged it necessary to hold a separate Conference for the Irish preachers. The first session was in Dublin, 1782. By Wesley's direction, Coke presided in it; and from this time for nearly thirty years he generally filled the presidential chair in the Irish Conference, and when not president of the British Conference, he was accustomed to act as its secretary. Wesley called him his right-hand.

To Dr. Coke is credited the suggestion which secured the Wesleyan chapels, and consequently the economy of Wesleyan Methodism, after the death of the Founder. Most of the trust deeds secured the right of appointing preachers for the chapels to him, while many vested that right in the Conference. But who were the Conference? It was composed of such preachers as Mr. Wesley called together to counsel with him, and none others. At his death the word Conference would have no legal meaning. This result many feared, and some hoped, would prove fatal to the union of the Societies. Wesley, after legal advice, prepared a "Deed of Declaration," constituting one hundred preachers, whom he named therein, the Conference of the people called

Methodists—making provision for the filling of vacancies and for their annual meeting, and defining their duties and powers so as to secure the occupancy of the meeting-houses, and other Society property, to the Methodists, according to the original design. This deed being recorded in the High Court of Chancery, the questions of identity, doctrine, and government were settled.

The “Deed” has stood the test of litigation and of revolution. It has proved a sheet-anchor. Of course preachers who were expecting to settle down into snug berths of Independency upon the dissolution of the United Society were disappointed, as also were trustees, who meant to call and govern pastors; and land proprietors, who were waiting for the buildings and grounds to revert. A few itinerants, of age and standing, whose names were not included in the legal hundred, were displeased and withdrew. Whitehead and Hampson, wrote, each in his own style, a history of Wesley and Methodism, from which the enemies of both have not ceased, to this day, to supply themselves with weapons offensive. But the “Deed” was accepted by the great body of preachers and people as a timely and most judicious instrument. After some perturbations, the practical good sense and constitution-abiding temper which are characteristic of Englishmen prevailed, and Wesleyan Methodism settled down to its great mission.

The “Deed of Declaration,” while conserving the doctrinal and itinerant plan under which Methodism had worked for more than forty years, proved sufficiently flexible, under the patient and wise handling of Englishmen, for the expansion of educational and missionary operations to an extent not dreamed of by Wesley; and also, in late years, for the admission of a practical system of lay representation at the Annual Conference. Instead of being scattered at the death of their Founder, the Societies struck their roots deeper, and extended their branches wider. Says Thomas Jackson: “Extensive revivals broke out in several places; new Societies were formed, and older ones were quickened and augmented; and many chapels, of various sizes, were erected and enlarged. Within ten years after Mr. Wesley’s death, the Societies were increased in Great Britain alone more than forty thousand members; and in twenty years, they were increased upward of one hundred thousand.”

At the British Conference of 1784, the “Deed of Declaration,” which gave consistency and permanence to Methodism at home,

was announced as enrolled and in operation; and at the same Conference was announced the carrying out of another measure of equal importance to Methodism in America. It had been under consideration and virtually determined on before; but Fletcher was present with Wesley and Coke at the Leeds Conference, and there, with his assistance, the details were settled.

The zeal, the ability, and the piety which Coke had for several years manifested, both in England and Ireland, combined to point him out as the most suitable person to engage in this arduous work, and to assume that character with which Wesley was about to invest him. Accordingly, in the month of February, 1784, he called Coke into his private chamber, and, after some preparatory observations, introduced the important subject to him in nearly the following manner:

That, as the Revolution in America had separated the United States from the mother country forever, and the Episcopal Establishment was utterly abolished, the Societies had been represented to him in a most deplorable condition. That an appeal had also been made to him through Mr. Asbury, in which he was requested to provide for them some mode of Church government suited to their exigences; and that having long and seriously revolved the subject in his thoughts, he intended to adopt the plan which he was now about to unfold. That as he had invariably endeavored, in every step he had taken, to keep as closely to the Bible as possible, so, on the present occasion, he hoped he was not about to deviate from it. That, keeping his eyes upon the conduct of the primitive Churches in the ages of unadulterated Christianity, he had much admired the mode of ordaining bishops which the Church of Alexandria had practiced. That to preserve its purity, that Church would never suffer the interference of a foreign bishop in any of their ordinations; but that the presbyters of that venerable apostolic Church, on the death of a bishop, exercised the right of ordaining another from their own body, by the laying on of their own hands; and that this practice continued among them for two hundred years, till the days of Dionysius. And finally, that, being himself a presbyter, he wished Dr. Coke to accept ordination from his hands, and to proceed in that character to the continent of America, to superintend the Societies in the United States.\*

Coke was startled at a measure so unprecedented in modern days, and time was allowed him to deliberate on it. Two months, however, had scarcely elapsed, before he wrote to Mr. Wesley, informing him that he was ready to coöperate with him. At the ensuing Conference (Leeds, 1784), Wesley stated his intention to the preachers present. Whatcoat and Vasey offered their services to accompany Dr. Coke in the character of missionaries. It is to this measure that Wesley alludes in his journal: "On

Wednesday, September 1st, being now clear in my own mind, I took a step which I had long weighed."

The Conference at Leeds ended, Wesley repaired to Bristol, and Coke to London to make arrangements for his departure. He had not, however, been long in London, before he received a letter from Wesley, requesting him to repair immediately to Bristol, and to bring with him the Rev. Mr. Creighton, a regularly ordained minister, who was then officiating in Wesley's chapels in London, and assisting him in various branches of his ministerial duties. The Doctor and Mr. Creighton accordingly met him in Bristol, when, with their assistance, he ordained Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey presbyters for America, having first ordained them deacons; and being peculiarly attached to every rite of the Church of England, he afterward ordained Dr. Coke a superintendent, or bishop, being assisted therein by presbyters, according to the usual order, and gave him letters of ordination under his hand and seal. Of these letters of ordination the following is a copy, carefully transcribed from the original in Wesley's own handwriting:

To all to whom these presents shall come, John Wesley, late Fellow of Lincoln College, in Oxford, Presbyter of the Church of England, sendeth greeting.

Whereas many of the people in the southern provinces of North America, who desire to continue under my care, and still adhere to the doctrines and discipline of the Church of England, are greatly distressed for want of ministers to administer the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, according to the usage of the said Church; and whereas there does not appear to be any other way of supplying them with ministers:

Know all men that I, John Wesley, think myself to be providentially called at this time to set apart some persons for the work of the ministry in America. And therefore, under the protection of Almighty God, and with a single eye to his glory, I have this day set apart, as a Superintendent, by the imposition of my hands, and prayer (being assisted by other ordained ministers), Thomas Coke, Doctor of Civil Law, a Presbyter of the Church of England, and a man whom I judge to be well qualified for that great work. And I do hereby recommend him to all whom it may concern as a fit person to preside over the flock of Christ. In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal, this second day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-four.

JOHN WESLEY.

Wesley wrote the following letter, which Dr. Coke was directed to print and circulate among the Societies on his arrival in America, and which, accordingly, was printed and circulated in America, and made the basis of the further action that was taken after his arrival. It possesses high historical value and importance:

“BRISTOL, September 10, 1784.

“*To Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury, and our brethren in North America.*

“By a very uncommon train of providences, many of the provinces of North America are totally disjoined from the mother country, and erected into independent States. The English Government has no authority over them, either civil or ecclesiastical, any more than over the States of Holland. A civil authority is exercised over them, partly by the Congress, partly by the provincial assemblies. But no one either exercises or claims any ecclesiastical authority at all. In this peculiar situation, some thousands of the inhabitants of these States desire my advice; and in compliance with their desire, I have drawn up a little sketch.

“Lord King’s account of the primitive Church convinced me, many years ago, that bishops and presbyters are the same order, and consequently have the same right to ordain. For many years I have been importuned, from time to time, to exercise this right, by ordaining part of our traveling preachers. But I have still refused; not only for peace’s sake, but because I was determined, as little as possible, to violate the established order of the national Church, to which I belonged.

“But the case is widely different between England and North America. Here are bishops who have a legal jurisdiction. In America there are none, neither any parish ministers; so that for some hundreds of miles together there is none either to baptize or administer the Lord’s Supper. Here, therefore, my scruples are at an end; and I conceive myself at full liberty, as I violate no order, and invade no man’s right, by appointing and sending laborers into the harvest.

“I have accordingly appointed Dr. Coke and Mr. Francis Asbury to be joint superintendents over our brethren in North America; as also Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey to act as elders among them, by baptizing and administering the Lord’s Supper. And I have prepared a liturgy, little differing from that of the Church of England (I think the best constituted national Church in the world), which I advise all the traveling preachers to use on the Lord’s-day in all the congregations, reading the litany only on Wednesdays and Fridays, and praying extempore on all other days. I also advise the elders to administer the Supper of the Lord on every Lord’s-day.



“If any one will point out a more rational and scriptural way of feeding and guiding these poor sheep in the wilderness, I will gladly embrace it. At present I cannot see any better method than that I have taken.

“It has indeed been proposed to desire the English bishops to ordain part of our preachers for America. But to this I object: 1. I desired the Bishop of London to ordain one, but could not prevail. 2. If they consented, we know the slowness of their proceedings; but the matter admits of no delay. 3. If they would ordain them now, they would expect to govern them. And how grievously would this entangle us! 4. As our American brethren are now totally disentangled, both from the State and the English hierarchy, we dare not entangle them again either with the one or the other. They are now at full liberty simply to follow the Scriptures and the primitive Church. And we judge it best that they should stand fast in that liberty wherewith God has so strangely made them free. JOHN WESLEY.”

The abridgment of the English liturgy, alluded to in the above paper, was not only prepared but printed by Wesley, and sent out by Coke. Besides containing the “Sunday service,” it contained forms for the administration of baptism and the Lord’s Supper, for marriage and burial, and also forms for the ordination of deacons, elders, and superintendents—the three distinct offices of the ministry in an episcopally constituted Church. The name of bishop, in the English ordinal, is changed to superintendent, and the name of presbyter, or priest, to elder—the new names being, in both cases, synonymous with the old ones, and the relative duties the same.

Being now prepared for the great work before him, Thomas Coke, with his companions, Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey, embarked on board a vessel bound to New York. They sailed from Bristol on the 18th of September.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

The Christmas Conference—Events Before and After—Organization and Church Extension—Asbury Crossing the Mountains—Methodism Planted on the Southern Frontier—On the Western—On the Northern—And in Nova Scotia.

BISHOP COKE and the two accompanying presbyters landed at New York, November 3, 1784, and were welcomed by John Dickins, the Methodist preacher of the city. He had been one of the Fluvanna Conference. The letter, four years before, setting forth the preachers' appeal to the Founder of Methodism for help had been drawn by his hand. The helpers had come, and the provisions for the case were so complete and satisfactory that he not only approved them but wished to publish the whole scheme at once, for the pleasure of all concerned. It was deemed expedient, however, to make no further disclosure till Asbury could be consulted.

Preaching and traveling toward the South, they passed through Philadelphia, and came to Wilmington, to Dover, and to a chapel where Asbury had a quarterly-meeting appointed. He was coming up from the peninsula to hold it. Judge Barratt contributed so liberally to the building of this first chapel in Delaware that it was called by his name. Of brick, forty-eight by forty-two feet, with galleries and a vestry, it was long considered the best country chapel in Methodism. It required influence as well as money to build it; for when so substantial a structure was going up, one of the Sanballats of the community declared it was "unnecessary to provide such a place of worship for the Methodists, for by the time the war is over a corn-crib will hold them all." On Sunday, November 14, Coke arrived, with Whatcoat, at Barratt's Chapel. He is in the midst of new and interesting scenes, and describes them:

In this chapel in the midst of a forest, I had a noble congregation, to whom I endeavored to set forth the Redeemer as our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. After the sermon, a plain, robust man came up to me in the pulpit and kissed me. I thought it could be no other than Mr. Asbury, and I was not deceived. I administered the sacrament, after preaching, to five or six hundred communicants, and held a love-feast. It was the best season I ever knew, except one at Charlemont in Ireland. After dinner Mr. Asbury and I had a pri-

vate conversation on the future management of our affairs in America. He informed me that he had received some intimations of my arrival on the continent, and had collected a considerable number of the preachers to form a council, and if they were of opinion that it would be expedient immediately to call a Conference, it should be done. They were accordingly sent for, and, after debate, were unanimously of that opinion. We therefore sent off Freeborn Garrettson, like an arrow, from north to south, directing him to send messengers to the right and left, and to gather all the preachers together at Baltimore on Christmas-eve. Mr. Asbury has also drawn up for me a route of about a thousand miles in the meantime. He has given me his black (Harry by name), and borrowed an excellent horse for me. I exceedingly reverence Mr. Asbury; he has so much of wisdom and consideration, so much meekness and love; and under all this, though hardly to be perceived, so much command and authority. He and I had agreed to use our joint endeavors to establish a school or college. I baptized here thirty or forty infants, and seven adults. We had indeed a precious time at the baptism of the adults.

Asbury knew not that Coke was present till he arrived at the chapel. The occasion was a quarterly-meeting of the circuit, and fifteen of the preachers and a host of the laity were there. Ezekiel Cooper, who became an eminent preacher, was a spectator of the scene, and says: "While Coke was preaching, Asbury came into the congregation. A solemn pause and deep silence took place at the close of the sermon, as an interval for introduction and salutation. Asbury and Coke, with hearts full of brotherly love, approached, embraced, and saluted each other. The other preachers, at the same time, were melted into sympathy and tears. The congregation also caught the glowing emotion, and the whole assembly, as if struck with a shock of heavenly electricity, burst into a flood of tears. Every heart appeared overflowing with love and fellowship, and an ecstasy of joy and gladness ensued. I can never forget the affecting scene. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered, by the Doctor and Whatcoat, to several hundred, and it was a blessed season to many souls, while in the holy ordinance they discerned, through faith, the Lord's body, and showed forth his death. It is the more affecting to my memory, as it was the first time I ever partook of the Lord's Supper, and the first time that the ordinance was ever administered among the Methodists by their own regularly ordained preachers."

The route planned for Coke was through the Eastern Shore, and Black Harry was guide, servant, and assistant preacher. "I have now," he writes on the 29th of November, "had the pleasure of hearing Harry preach several times. I sometimes give notice, immediately after preaching, that in a little time he will preach

to the blacks; but the whites always stay to hear him. It is romantic to see such numbers of horses fastened to the trees. Being engaged in the most solemn exercises of religion, for three or four hours every day, I hardly know the day of the week; every one appears to me like the Lord's-day. Perhaps I have, in this tour, baptized more children and adults than I should in my whole life if stationed in an English parish."

Coke passed through Queen Anne county—where Thomas Ware, a young preacher, sketches him:

He passed through our circuit. I met him on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. At first I was not pleased with his appearance. His stature, complexion, and voice resembled those of a woman rather than those of a man; and his manners were too courtly for me. So unlike was he to the grave and, as I conceived, apostolic Asbury, that his appearance did not prepossess me favorably. He had several appointments on the circuit, to which I conducted him; and, before we parted, I saw so many things to admire in him that I no longer marveled at his being selected by Wesley to serve us in the capacity of a superintendent. In public he was generally admired, and in private he was very communicative and edifying. At one time, in a large circle, he expressed himself in substance as follows: "I am charmed by the spirit of my American brethren. Their love to Mr. Wesley is not surpassed by that of their brethren in Europe. It is founded on the excellence—the *divinity*—of the religion which he has been the instrument of reviving, and which has shed its benign influence on this land of freedom. I see," he continued, with a countenance glowing with delight, "a great and effectual door opened for the promulgation of Methodism in America, whose institutions I greatly admire, and whose prosperity I no less wish than I do that of the land which gave me birth. In the presence of Mr. Asbury I feel myself a child. He is, in my estimation, the most apostolic man I ever saw, except Mr. Wesley."

Thomas Ware had been admitted on trial in May preceding, and in this connection we may present his impressions of Asbury: "It was the first Conference I attended. There was quite a number of preachers present. Although there were but few on whose heads time had begun to snow, yet several of them appeared to be way-worn and weather-beaten into premature old age. Among these pioneers, Asbury, by common consent, stood first and chief. There was something in his person, his eye, his mien, and in the music of his voice, which interested all who saw and heard him. He possessed much natural wit, and was capable of the severest satire; but grace and good sense so far predominated that he never descended to any thing beneath the dignity of a man and a Christian minister. In prayer he excelled." Garrettson says, "He prayed the best, and he prayed the most,

of any man I ever knew." Another declared that though a strong preacher, and sometimes impressively eloquent, his prayers nearly always made his sermons a disappointment to strangers.

Whatcoat and Vasey had accompanied Asbury from Barratt's Chapel over the Western Shore of Maryland. The 26th of November Asbury observed "as a day of fasting and prayer, that I might," he says, "know the will of God in the matter that is shortly to come before our Conference; the preachers and people seem to be much pleased with the projected plan; I myself am led to think it is of the Lord. I am not tickled with the honor to be gained; I see danger in the way. My soul waits upon God. O that he may lead us in the way we should go!"

About the middle of December they all met at Perry Hall, and Gough's ample hospitalities were well suited to their deliberations. "Here," says Coke, "I have a noble room to myself, where Mr. Asbury and I may, in the course of a week, mature every thing for the Conference." Garrettson had proved a good herald. In six weeks he had compassed most of the land, and gathered to Baltimore over sixty out of eighty-three traveling preachers. On Friday, the 24th of December, 1784, the little company at Perry Hall rode to Baltimore, and at ten o'clock A.M. began the first "General Conference," in the Lovely Lane Chapel.

Coke took the chair, and the "Circular Letter" of Wesley was read. In accordance with this document, says Asbury, "it was agreed to form ourselves into an Episcopal Church, and to have superintendents, elders, and deacons." Asbury declined ordination to the superintendency, unless, in addition to the appointment of Wesley, his brethren should formally elect him to that office.\* He was unanimously elected; and on the second day of the session (25th) he was ordained deacon by Coke, assisted by his presbyters, Vasey and Whatcoat; on Sunday, the third day, they ordained him elder; on Monday he was consecrated superintendent, or bishop—his friend, Otterbein, of the German Church, assisting Coke and his elders in the rite, at Asbury's special request. Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday were spent in enacting rules of discipline, and in the election of preachers to orders. On Fri-

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\*A departure from Wesley's plan. We owe constitutional government, from the beginning, to Asbury. Coke yielded to American ideas, but regretted it when Wesley's nominees for the episcopacy were afterward rejected, and when other results of Conference autonomy followed. (*Sou. Quar. Rev.*, July, 1885, p. 377.)

day several deacons were ordained; on Saturday, January 1st, the project of Cokesbury College at Abingdon was considered; on Sunday, the 2d, ten elders (previously ordained deacons) and one deacon were ordained; and then the General Conference—known as the *Christmas Conference*—adjourned.

The elders were John Tunnell, William Gill, Le Roy Cole, Nelson Reed, John Haggerty, Reuben Ellis, Richard Ivey, Henry Willis, James O'Kelly, and Beverly Allen. Tunnell and Willis were "on the extremities of the work," and perhaps were absent on that account. They and Allen were ordained subsequently. John Dickins, Ignatius Pigman, and Caleb Boyer were chosen deacons. Boyer and Pigman were ordained in June following at the Conference in Baltimore. In compliance with the call from Nova Scotia, Garrettson and James O. Cromwell were ordained elders for that province. Jeremiah Lambert was ordained to the same office for Antigua, in the West Indies.

Watters says that Wesley's plan was adopted, "in a regular formal manner, with not one dissenting voice." Black, from Nova Scotia, had come for help; he gazed upon the scene with admiration. "Perhaps," he says, "such a number of holy, zealous, godly men never before met together in Maryland, perhaps not on the continent of America." Their work of ten days has been before us for a century, and speaks for itself. Says a chronicler of the occasion: "The secret of their success was their oneness of spirit. Like the disciples in the chamber at Jerusalem, 'they were all of one heart and of one mind.' Whoever looks at the system of rules or of government devised and sent forth by the General Conference of 1784 must concede to it a 'wholesidedness,' and unselfishness both as it regards the preachers themselves and the people under their care."

Coke's ordination sermon was published. It did not fall dead from the press. He was called to account in England for some expressions in it—perhaps for these: "You may now perceive the dreadful effects of raising immoral or unconverted men to the government of the Church. The baneful influence of their example is so extensive that the skill and cruelty of devils can hardly fabricate a greater curse than an irreligious bishop. But thou, O man of God, follow after righteousness, godliness, patience, and meekness. Be an example to the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."

The "Articles of Religion" prepared by Wesley are an abridgment of the "Thirty-nine Articles" of the Church of England, omitting the third, eighth, thirteenth, fifteenth, seventeenth (Calvinistic), eighteenth, twentieth, twenty-first, twenty-third, thirty-fifth, thirty-sixth, and thirty-seventh of the latter, also parts of the sixth, ninth, and nineteenth, and introducing verbal emendations of others. These, being for the first time proposed in form, were unanimously adopted. The Conference added an article on Civil Rulers, numbered twenty-three; making in all twenty-five.

The standards of doctrine received by British Methodism, and in the late "Deed of Declaration" named, were Wesley's four volumes of sermons (comprising from one to fifty-three, in our current series) and "Notes on the New Testament." These had also been received in America, and the preachers in Conference assembled had more than once pledged themselves to "preach the doctrines taught in the four volumes of sermons and the 'Notes on the New Testament.'" They had also resolved, by way of guarding against unsound European preachers who might come over, to hold them to that doctrinal test. The "Articles" are a terse and strong setting forth of Christian dogma, so far as they go; and they could not have been left out of any abridgment of the "Book of Common Prayer," by Wesley, without an improper inference; but there are essential Wesleyan doctrines not mentioned in them, as the witness of the Spirit and Christian perfection. The "Articles of Religion," together with the "established standards" of doctrine, make a system as complete as it is orthodox; and Episcopal Methodism has not only been faithful to these Articles and standards, but has thrown around them the strongest constitutional guards.

Under the "General Rules" the membership of Methodism, both in England and America, had been gathered; and this brief and, for its size, very complete system of Christian ethics or morals was ordered to be read "once a year in every congregation, and once a quarter in every Society."

No person could be ordained a superintendent, elder, or deacon, without the consent of a majority of the Conference, and the consent and imposition of the hands of a superintendent. The superintendent was made amenable for his conduct to the Conference, "who have power to expel him for improper conduct if they see it necessary." If by death, expulsion, or otherwise.

there be no superintendent remaining in our Church, "the Conference shall elect one, and the elders, or any three of them, shall ordain him according to our liturgy."

The business was transacted under the form of questions and answers: "Question 37: What shall be the regular annual salary of the elders, deacons, and helpers? Answer: Sixty-four dollars and no more; and for each preacher's wife sixty-four dollars; and for each preacher's child, if under the age of six years, there shall be allowed sixteen dollars; and for each child of the age of six and under the age of eleven years twenty-one dollars and thirty-three cents." This rule of allowance for children was canceled in 1787; and no regular provision was made until 1800.

It was enacted: "We will on no account whatsoever suffer any elder or deacon among us to receive a fee or present for administering the ordinance of marriage, baptism, or the burial of the dead; freely we receive, and freely we give." "After a few years," says Jesse Lee, "it was thought best to take a present for performing the marriage ceremony; and for the money so received to be given in to the stewards of the circuit, to be applied to the making up of the preacher's quarterage; but in case the preachers of the circuit received their quarterage without it, then the money so received should be brought to the next Conference and be applied to the making up of the deficiencies of the preachers. But there was another alteration made in 1800, and each preacher was then allowed to take for marrying people what they chose to give him, and to keep it, without giving any account of it; which custom has prevailed ever since." Connectionalism, unity, pervaded every thing. The ministry was yet one family, with common privations and common resources.

The Conference devised a plan of relief for "superannuated preachers, and the widows and orphans of preachers." It was called the "Preachers' Fund," and was to be provided by the preachers themselves paying, at their admission to the Conference and annually afterward, two dollars. The Chartered Fund, incorporated in 1797, absorbed and superseded this plan. But the "Conference Collection"—the best reliance—an annual contribution by the Church in this behalf, soon came into vogue, and continues to this day.

A strong deliverance on the subject of slavery was made, and specific and peremptory directions for emancipation were laid



down, to which we must recur, in connection with the whole subject, for it made much history.

The administration of the sacraments was provided for, and rules prescribed for uniformity and propriety and profiting in the same. The admission of persons into the Church was regulated, and also the form of public worship, of love-feasts, and class-meetings. Prohibitions were enacted against superfluity and extravagance in apparel, and the marriage of Christians with unawakened persons. Directions were given for singing, and how congregations should be seated—"let the men and women sit apart in all our chapels."

Rules were given for the conduct of preachers: how their time should be occupied and their labors bestowed for the edification of the Church—in preaching, in visiting, in instructing the children, in studying: *saving souls* is the great business.

The men of 1784 were mostly young or middle-aged. Several old heads were there on young shoulders. They were no constitution-mongers. Of course they left undone some things which afterward had to be done; and they did some things which had to be undone. Special legislation, from the beginning, has been prolific of repeals; and Methodists have been warned, from that day to this, not to be wise above what is written.

They adjourned without providing for any subsequent General Conference. No division of the wide field into Annual Conferences, with boundaries, was made until twelve years later. The Bishops called the itinerant ministers to meet annually where it was most convenient for any considerable number of them. All such sessions, down to the organization of the quadrennial General Conference, were considered as adjourned meetings of the undivided ministry. The enactments of no one session were binding on general questions till they had been virtually adopted at the other sessions of the same ecclesiastical year, and had thus become the expression of a majority of the ministry.

No limitation of the pastoral term was fixed. Preachers had been exchanging circuits annually, semi-annually, and even quarterly. In the "Deed of Declaration," the maximum had been fixed at three years for the British Methodists, and so remains to this day. Wesley was in principle an itinerant. Speaking of certain preachers, he said: "Be their talents ever so great, they will, ere long, grow dead themselves, and so will most

of those that hear them. I know, were I myself to preach one whole year in one place, I should preach both myself and most of my congregation asleep. Nor can I ever believe it was ever the will of our Lord that any congregation should have one teacher only. We have found, by long and constant experience, that a frequent change of teachers is best. This preacher has one talent, that another. No one, whom I ever knew, has all the talents which are needful for beginning, continuing, and perfecting the work of grace in a whole congregation."

The work of Church extension began at the Christmas Conference. Asbury took horse the day after adjournment and rode forty miles. Lambert left for Antigua. Garrettson and Cromwell embarked for Nova Scotia, in view of which they had been ordained, about the middle of February; a voyage, at that season, uncomfortable and even dangerous. Methodism had obtained a limited existence among the colonists composing the Eastern British Provinces, about four years before, by the labors of William Black. He had succeeded in raising a few Societies, and came to Baltimore to press the importance of sending missionaries to that promising field. Garrettson and Cromwell landed at Halifax, and began their missionary labors—the first missionaries from the United States to "foreign lands;" and the first missionary collection of the Methodist Episcopal Church was taken up the same year by the bishops for the support of these missionaries (£30). They found there John Mann—a convert of Boardman in New York ten years before—who had supplied the John Street Church during the Revolutionary War, while the English held the city. He joined with them, and made a fourth itinerant. They found also some loyal refugees from the States, and formed a Society with which to begin the organization of Methodism in the colony. The missionaries had success. They extended their field to the island of Newfoundland and to New Brunswick. Garrettson labored in these provinces for two years. Wesley, at his instance, sent other missionaries; and, when Garrettson returned to the States, there were in Nova Scotia over seven hundred members. Methodism has long had in Eastern British America thousands of members, with chapels and all the appliances of religious prosperity, and an able corps of preachers.

Bishop Asbury determined to occupy the fields which had been attempted nearly fifty years before by the Oxford Methodists.

and turned his face to South Carolina and Georgia. He left Baltimore, January, 4, 1785, in company with Woolman Hickson, and on the 8th reached Culpepper, Virginia, where Henry Willis had stopped on his way to the Conference. The next day he read prayers, preached, and ordained Willis a deacon—his first act of ordination—and baptized some children. Henry Willis now joined himself to the company, and when they arrived at Carter's Church on the 18th, the Bishop ordained him elder, administered the sacrament, and held the love-feast. The Lord was with them eminently in each of these services. Henry Willis had gone beyond the mountains the last year, and was too far west to be reached by Garrettsen when summoning men to the Christmas Conference; but he got word of it and was trying to reach the post of duty, when Asbury met him. Under his guidance they passed into North Carolina, and reached the mansion of Colonel Herndon, on the head-waters of the Pedee, and within the bounds of the Yadkin Circuit. Here they rested for a few days, and made preparation for their journey into South Carolina. Jesse Lee came up from Salisbury to attend the Bishop's appointment at this place, and was requested to travel with him during his trip to the South. "Nothing," says Asbury, "could have better pleased our old Church folks than the late step we have taken in administering the ordinances; to the *Catholic* Presbyterians it also gives satisfaction; but the Baptists are discontented."

The company, now fully formed, entered upon their journey, daily in every house ceasing not to teach and preach Jesus Christ and him crucified. They entered South Carolina at Cheraw, and were welcomed to the hospitalities of a merchant who had been a Methodist in Virginia, and in whose employment there was a clerk, a native of Massachusetts. This young man gave Lee an account of the customs and religious life of New England, and kindled in him a desire, that ripened into a purpose, to visit that part of the country on a mission. They arrived at Georgetown, and Bishop Asbury preached at night to a serious congregation. Just as they were about to start for the place of worship, the gentleman at whose house they were stopping excused himself, "as it was his turn to superintend a ball that night." They prayed that if the Lord had called them to Georgetown, he would open the heart and house of some other person to receive them. At the close of the service Mr. Wayne a cousin of Gen.

eral Anthony Wayne, invited them to call on him, and from that time his house became a home for Methodist preachers. They breakfasted with him, and on leaving he showed them the way to the river, and paid their ferriage.

According to custom, Willis went ahead of the party to put out appointments for preaching; and their host was thoughtful and kind enough to furnish him with a letter of introduction to a friend in Charleston. Asbury's journal says:

February 24.—We traveled on through a barren country, in all respects, to Charleston. We came that evening to Scott's, where the people seemed to be merry; they soon became mute. We talked and prayed with them. In the morning, when we took our leave of them, they would receive nothing. We met Brother Willis. He had gone along before us, and had made an acquaintance with Mr. Wells, a respectable merchant of the city, to whom he had carried letters of introduction from Mr. Wayne. I jogged on, dejected in spirit, and came to Mr. Wells's. We obtained the use of an old meeting-house belonging to the General Baptists, in which they had ceased to preach. Brother Willis preached at noon, Brother Lee morning and evening.

Charleston was almost as hard a place to gain a footing in as Paul and Silas found Philippi to be. "The inhabitants are vain and wicked to a proverb," is Asbury's observation. His first sermon was on March 2d; he "had but little enlargement." Next day the people were more solemn and attentive. "I find," he says, "there are here who oppose us—I leave the Lord to look to his own cause. I told my hearers that I expected to stay in the city but seven days; that I should preach every night, if they would favor me with their company, and that I should speak on subjects of primary importance to their souls, and explain the essential doctrines taught and held by the Methodists." Then followed "a discourse on the nature of conviction for sin," and some appeared to feel. After a sermon on the nature and necessity of repentance, he adds: "Ministers who had represented our principles in an unfavorable light, and strove to prepossess the people's minds against our doctrines—even these ministers came to hear. This afternoon Mr. Wells began to feel conviction; my soul praised the Lord for this fruit of our labors, this answer to our prayers." Fruit begins to appear. Of Wednesday, the 8th of March, he writes: "I had a good time on Matthew vii. 7. In the evening the clouds about Mr. Wells began to disperse; in the morning he could rejoice in the Lord. How great is the work of God!—once a sinner, yesterday a seeker, and now his

adopted child! Now we know that God hath brought us here, and have a hope that there will be a glorious work among the people—at least among the Africans.” The day following he preached his last sermon, and leaves with these reflections: “I loved and pitied the people, and left some under gracious impressions. We took our leave; and had the satisfaction of observing that Mrs. Wells appeared to be very sensibly affected.”

On their return through Georgetown he “found Mrs. Wayne under deep distress of soul.” So the work, as of old, begins and spreads. Henry Willis was left in Charleston, its first stationed preacher, and by his labors the church was organized which continues to this day.

Lee returned to his circuit and the Bishop passed on to meet the first Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, held at Green Hill’s in North Carolina, April 20, 1785. Willis at Charleston and Hickson at Georgetown made those points the centers of their movements. They traveled up the principal rivers—Pedee, Santee, Wateree, and Broad—and wherever settlements could be reached they established preaching-places. The next year, about the same time, Bishop Asbury made his second visit to South Carolina, and saw that seed had fallen upon good ground. Henry Willis came as far as Georgetown to meet him, and as they rode to Charleston, Asbury records: “It was no small comfort to me to see a very good frame prepared for the erection of a meeting-house for us, on that very road along which, last year, we had gone pensive and distressed, without a friend to entertain us.” The services on Sunday (Jan. 15) in Charleston were hopeful: “We had a solemn time in the day, and a full house and good time in the evening. My heart was much taken up with God. Our congregations are large, and our people are encouraged to undertake the building of a meeting-house this year.”

The Conference at Green Hill’s included all of Virginia, and of North and South Carolina, who could be present, and they were entertained in one house. Here Asbury was joined by Coke, who says: “There were about twenty preachers, or more, in one house, and by laying beds on the floors there was room for all. We spent three days, from Wednesday to Friday inclusive, in Conference, and a comfortable time we had together. In this division we had an increase of nine hundred and ninety-one this year,

and have stretched our borders into Georgia. Beverly Allen has all Georgia to range in."

Beverly Allen was now ordained elder, and began to "range." He turned out to be one of those popular preachers who find work everywhere else but where they are appointed; who promise much and come to nothing: he came to worse than nothing. The bad eminence of being the first apostate Methodist presbyter is his. He managed to get up a personal correspondence with Wesley, by which he derived more consideration than he was entitled to; married rich; fell into sin; was expelled; went into business; failed; killed the marshal who was arresting him; fled to a part of Kentucky in Logan county then called "Rogues' Harbor;" became a Universalist, and went out in obscure darkness: all this within the next dozen years. Nevertheless, faithful though less popular men were found to plant Methodism in Georgia, and heroically they did it.

Next year John Major and Thomas Humphries were appointed to that State. Presiding elders and their districts were not yet so named and laid off; but an elder, to preach and administer the sacraments, was assigned to a given region. South Carolina and Georgia were under James Foster as elder this year (1786). He had traveled in Virginia for two years, but excessive fasting and labor in the open air had enfeebled his constitution, and he was forced to locate. He removed to South Carolina, where he found some emigrant Methodists, and formed a circuit among them. He reëntered the Conference, and this was his first work. It was too great for him. His mental as well as his bodily strength gave way, and he retired after one year. He spent the rest of his life in visiting among Methodist families, conducting their family devotions with much propriety, though unable to preach to them. He was noted for his amenity, his fine personal appearance, and his usefulness.

Thomas Humphries, like Foster, was a Virginian, and had traveled three years in his native State and in North Carolina. After laboring a few years in Georgia, he moved to South Carolina, located within the bounds of Pedee Circuit, and was a useful local preacher for the rest of his days. John Major, his countryman and colleague, was called the weeping prophet. He did hard work for ten years, and ceased at once to work and live.

There were at that date in Georgia, as far as we can get the

facts, three Episcopal churches without rectors, three Lutheran churches, three Presbyterian, and three Baptist. We may safely say there were not five hundred Christian people in all. The inhabitants numbered eighty thousand, white and black. The social features of the country were those of all frontier settlements. The field was indeed a wide one, a hard one, and yet an inviting one. The two Georgia missionaries started from Conference for their work. They probably came at once to Wilkes county, where a few Virginia Methodists had settled, and then began to explore and map out the country. They found the people everywhere destitute of the Word. Save one or two Baptist churches organized by Marshall and Mercer, there was no church of any name north of Augusta. The western boundary of the State was the Oconee River; the southern, Florida; in all this area there were not more than seven Christian ministers. The settlements were upon the creeks and rivers, and the inhabitants were thinly settled all over the face of the land. The dwellings were pole-cabins in the country, and even the villages were built largely of logs. There were no houses of worship, and the missionaries preached only in private dwellings. The work had all to be laid out, and for the first year it is probable the two preachers visited together the settlements which were thickest, and organized Societies wherever they could. From the Minutes we conclude that they compassed the country from the Indian frontier on the north to the lower part of Burke county on the south. During the year four hundred and thirty members were brought into the Society, the larger number in Wilkes county.\*

One specimen of the mode and the measure of their operations may serve. Henry Parks, a strong and brave young man from North Carolina, with his young family settled in Elbert county, where he was employed to oversee a plantation. His wife, Elizabeth Justice, had been baptized by Jarratt, and joined the Methodists; but her husband was a stranger alike to grace and to them. One day the news came that two Methodist preachers would hold a meeting in the neighborhood. She persuaded her husband to go and hear them, and for the first time he heard, from Major, the doctrine of a universal atonement.† He determined to be saved, if he could be; was soon converted and joined the Methodist

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\* Smith's History of Methodism in Georgia. † Ibid.

Church; made his house a preaching-place; and afterward, with the help of his neighbors, built a meeting-house. God prospered him as far as he wished to be prospered in worldly matters, and blessed him with a large family. Of these William J. Parks was the youngest son, without mentioning whom the history of Georgia preachers and Methodism could hardly be written. The venerable patriarch lived until 1845. His descendants are among the leading Methodists of that State, and are very numerous.

Major and Humphries had done good work during the year, and at the next Conference they were reënforced by two young men. Georgia was made a separate district, and Richard Ivey was sent as elder. Circuits were now laid out. The Burke Circuit, including all that section south and south-west of Augusta, was placed in charge of Major, with Matthew Harris to assist him. Thomas Humphries and Moses Park took charge of all the country north and north-west of Augusta. Of Ivey, the Minutes say: "He was from Virginia, a little man of quick and solid parts. He was a holy, self-denying Christian that lived to be useful. Many of the eighteen years that he was in the work he acted as an elder in charge of a district." He had acquired valuable experience before he came to Georgia, where, after four years' service, his health failed, and the needs of an invalid mother called him back home. A year after his location, he passed to his final reward. The preachers pursued their labors with great zeal, and at the end of 1787 there were over one thousand one hundred members. The Church had tripled its membership in one year. This success was not to be wondered at. Ivey, Major, and Humphries were no common men, and the pioneers of Georgia heard for the first time the doctrines of a universal atonement and the Spirit's witness.

It is supposed that during this year Humphries must have preached in Augusta, and perhaps in Savannah, but all that was accomplished was confined to the rural settlements. The Washington Circuit, much the largest, included all that section of North-eastern and Eastern Georgia above Augusta. Georgia was long the Southern frontier. It has been propitious for Methodism. The leaven is in the lump, the seed is in the soil, and we must now leave it for awhile.

South Carolina had been reënforced from the Conference held at Salisbury, February, 1786. Henry Willis returned to



Charleston with Isaac Smith as his colleague. The last name introduces us to a new man, who is hereafter to spend and be spent on the Southern frontier. Isaac Smith, a native of Virginia, served as private and officer in the Revolutionary War; was present at the battles of Princeton, Brandywine, Germantown, Monmouth, and Stony Point, and bore the honorable scars of the conflict to his grave. He had been a colleague of Lee, and also of Humphries in North Carolina, and is to fill prominent appointments in South Carolina till 1796; then he locates and engages in mercantile pursuits in Camden. Reëntering the itinerancy again, we shall meet with him where difficult posts are to be occupied. When he died in 1834, after more than half a century of ministerial labor, the Minutes record: "He was one of the fathers of the Church in this country, and entitled to be had in everlasting remembrance. We cannot trust ourselves to speak fully of him. He was the oldest, and, what was well becoming the father of the Conference, the most honored and beloved of all the preachers. Believing every word of God, meek above the reach of provocation, and thoroughly imbued with the spirit of love and devotion, he was a saint indeed."

His name is entered in the appointment at Charleston, but this year he formed the famous Edisto Circuit, reaching from Savannah River to within thirty miles of Charleston, and from Coosawhatchie Swamp to Santee, returning to the ensuing Conference two hundred and forty white members and four colored. It was during this year (1786), while forming the Edisto Circuit, that, riding upon the banks of the Santee, he felt the need of a deeper consecration to God; and dismounting from his horse, in a grove beside the river, he had a season of wrestling prayer, and from that time the assurance of God's love never forsook him for an hour. He would often come from his closet, after remaining an hour upon his knees, with his face glowing with a heavenly light. Says the historian of that time:

In this region (Edisto) the name Methodist was scarcely known till he visited it. The new name and his heart-searching preaching caused much stir among the people, as they had heard but little preaching before, and knew nothing of experimental religion. Many were convicted and converted, and a number of Societies, were formed. It was no uncommon event for persons to fall under his pungent preaching as suddenly as if they had been shot. The doctrine of the new birth was no better understood by the people then than it was by Nicodemus, until they were enlightened by his preaching. The pioneer of Methodism not only has to take

people as he finds them, but the gold has to be worked out of the ore. When Mr. Smith was forming Edisto Circuit, a gentleman who was not a professor of religion invited him to his home. While at his house his host observed that he frequently retired into the woods, and on one occasion followed him, when, to his great astonishment, he found him on his knees engaged in prayer. This struck him under conviction, and was the cause of his embracing religion soon after. The happy mixture of dignity, pleasantness, and meekness in his countenance was calculated to win the good opinion of such as beheld him. His appearance and his manners qualified him for the missionary work, and many of those whom he found dead in sin, and their tongues defiled with profane language, he soon rejoiced to hear praising God. He, like most of his brethren that were engaged in planting Methodism, did not weary his congregations with dry and tedious discourses, but their sermons were short and energetic. They enforced their preaching with the most consistent deportment in the families where they sojourned, always praying with them and for them, and speaking to each individual on the great matter of salvation.

Charleston, at last, began to show signs that Methodism had driven down its stake and intended to hold on. The plain wooden structure on Cumberland street, sixty by forty feet, with galleries for the colored people, approached completion; and the "Blue Meeting" house was ready for the next Conference, the first held in the State. It cost about five thousand dollars, exclusive of the one thousand five hundred dollar lot on which it stood; and the preachers reported thirty-three white members and fifty-three colored at the close of the year.

On the 12th of March, 1787, Bishop Asbury crossed the Little Pedee, and, attended by Hope Hull, came to Georgetown, receiving information on the route that Bishop Coke was in Charleston. He had arrived there from the West Indies, in February; had dedicated the new church, and was preaching daily. Such was the spirit of hearing excited among the inhabitants that from three to four hundred persons regularly attended the morning preaching. Asbury says: "We rode nearly fifty miles to get to Georgetown. Here the scene was greatly changed—almost the whole town came together to hear the word of the Lord. We arrived in Charleston and met Dr. Coke. Here we have already a spacious house prepared for us, and the congregations are crowded and solemn." Conference opened March 22d, and closed the 29th. For many successive years the Conference met in Charleston, until other places in the State became strong enough to contest this honor with it.

Two names appear this year on the Pedee Circuit that are

memorable—Hope Hull and Jeremiah Mastin. The latter was a young man in the second year of his ministry. After traveling the Pedee Circuit one year, he gave three years in succession to the Holston country, and located in 1790. Hope Hull was a native of Maryland, a classmate in the ministry of Mastin. Their popularity was very great, only equaled by their efficiency. When they left the Pedee country, Methodism was established there. The number of members in this historic circuit was this year increased to seven hundred and ninety whites and thirty-three colored. They also reported twenty-two churches, the most of which had been built during their term of service.

Hope Hull, after spending a year in South Carolina, transferred to Georgia, where he identified himself with the Church, and was felt in the moral and intellectual development of the State. With the exception of the year 1792, when he went to assist Jesse Lee in New England, and traveled the Hartford Circuit in Connecticut, Hope Hull gave the remainder of his ministerial life to Georgia. He located in 1795; established an academy in Wilkes county; removed to Athens in 1802; was one of the founders of the Georgia University, and at one time its acting president. He died in 1818. One of his ablest contemporaries thus describes him:

Mr. Hull was a fine specimen of what may be regarded an old-fashioned American Methodist preacher. His oratory was natural, his action being the unaffected expression of his inmost mind. Not only was there an entire freedom from every thing like mannerism, but there was a great harmony between his gesticulation and the expression of his countenance. He seemed, in some of his finest moods of thought, to *look* his words into his audience. He was one of nature's orators, who never spoiled his speaking by scholastic restraints. He wisely cultivated his mind and taste that he might rightly conceive and speak; but he left all external oratory to find its inspiration in his subject, and to warm itself into life in the glow of his mind. Hence, in many of his masterly efforts, his words rushed upon his audience like an avalanche, and multitudes seemed to be carried before him like the yielding captives of a stormed castle. Christians, entangled in the meshes of Satan's net, and ready to abandon their hope of the Divine mercy, have been cleared of these entanglements under his judicious tracings of the Holy Spirit in his manifold operations on the heart and conscience. Powerful emotion could be seen as it played in unmistakable outline upon the anxious believer's countenance, while undergoing one of these spiritual siftings; and when, at last the verdict was written on his heart that he was a child of God according to the rules of evidence laid down, all the conventional rules about the propriety of praise were broken by one welling wave of joy.\*

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\* Dr. Lovick Pierce, in Sprague's Annals.

It is the year of grace 1788, and of the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America the fourth. Eight Annual Conferences are to be held this epochal year—five of them for the first time. In order to realize the progress made, let us take the first grand round with the General Superintendent. Conferences have heretofore been confined to the old settlements on the Atlantic coast; but in various directions, north, south, west, and north-west, itinerants have gone forth, reconnoitered the frontiers, selected the strategic points under their leader's eye, and been reënforced by him according to the openings of Providence. It is time to develop and complete the system of occupation that has been forming on the outskirts. Those vital centers of influence and government—Conferences—must now be organized, so that what has been gained may be held, and aggressive movements may begin upon the regions beyond. We will start at Charleston, which has just entertained its second Conference, and keeping company with Bishop Asbury, return to the place of setting out. Leaving Charleston, March 17, the Bishop says: "Upon the whole, I have had more liberty to speak in Charleston this visit than I ever had before, and am of opinion that God will work here; but our friends are afraid of the cross." Thirty-six times did he visit that city after this date.

The Georgia Conference was to be held in the forks of Broad River, then in Wilkes, now Elbert, county—probably at the home of David Merriwether, who lived there, and who had recently joined the Church. In company with Isaac Smith, the Bishop made his way up the Saluda to the Broad River quarterly-meeting. To reach it, he says: "We rode till one o'clock on Friday the 21st of March; I believe we have traveled about two hundred miles in five days; dear Brother Smith accompanied me. I was so unwell that I had but little satisfaction at the quarterly-meeting; my service was burdensome; but the people were lively." Here he met Mason; and here too was John Major, who had come to meet him. Consumption was wearing this saintly man into his grave; but he was well enough to exhort after Asbury had preached. His journal says: "April 1.—We crossed the Savannah at the Forks, and came where I much wanted to be, in Georgia. April 2.—I rested; and compiled two sections, which I shall recommend to be put into our form of discipline in order to re-

move from Society, by regular steps, either preachers or people that are disorderly." There were ten present—six members of the Conference and four probationers. The good Major was not able to meet with his brethren; on his way to Conference he sunk, and near the time it ended its session he went to rest.

Richard Ivey, Thomas Humphries, Moses Park, Hope Hull, James Conner, Bennett Maxey, Isaac Smith, Matthew Harris, and Reuben Ellis, and probably John Mason from the adjoining Circuit in South Carolina, constituted the Conference. Of these, six only were to remain in Georgia. Three or four of them were quite young; the rest, unmarried men of mature years. They received their appointments, and the Bishop left them for Holston Conference. A noble picket guard, they were to hold the Southern frontier. No mean addition to their number was Hope Hull. He was appointed to the Washington Circuit. He was called the "Broad-ax," because of the power of his ministry. If not the father of Georgia Methodism, he was second to no other in fostering it.\*

Emigrants from Virginia and North Carolina had moved beyond the Alleghanies, and settled in the valleys of the Holston and Nollichucky and French Broad rivers; they had also ventured into Kentucky and Middle Tennessee. The Indian dwelt in the land. The pioneers were compelled to dwell for safety in strongly defended forts, or "stations." Among the emigrants, there was occasionally a local preacher, hardy, godly, and gifted, to preach to such a community, and to form small Societies in various localities.

As early as 1784, the itinerants crossed the mountains. Two years later, James Haw and Benjamin Ogden were commissioned for the wide circuit of "Kentucky." In 1787, Bishop Coke, referring to a letter received from Haw, says: "One of our elders who last year was sent with a preacher to Kentucky, on the banks of the Ohio, wrote me a most enlivening account of his district, and earnestly implored some further assistance. 'But observe,' added he, 'no man must be appointed to this country that is afraid to die. For there is now war with the Indians, who frequently lurk behind the trees, shoot the travelers, and then scalp them; and we have one Society on the very frontiers of the Indian country.'"

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\* Smith's History of Methodism in Georgia.

Recrossing the Savannah River, and pursuing his route through upper South Carolina, Bishop Asbury held his course north-westward. First and last he crossed the Alleghanies sixty times. The perils of the mountains were succeeded by the danger of high waters. He seldom went through the country without being thoroughly soaked with rain, or having to swim some river or creek. Most commonly his rides were from early breakfast, without intermission, until evening—sometimes nine and ten o'clock at night. We give a few items from his journal:

North Carolina, April 22.—We went on, and reached Brother White's, on Johns River, about ten o'clock at night; here I found both the saddles broke, both horses foundered, and both their backs sore—so we stopped a few days.

April 28.—After getting our horses shod, we made a move for Holstein, and entered upon the mountains; the first of which I called steel, the second stone, and the third iron mountain; they are rough, and difficult to climb. We were spoken to on our way by the most awful thunder and lightning, accompanied by heavy rain. We crept for shelter into a little dirty house where the filth might have been taken from the floor with a spade; we felt the want of fire, but could get little wood to make it, and what we gathered was wet. At the head of Watauga we fed, and reached Ward's that night. Coming to the river next day, we hired a young man to swim over for the canoe, in which we crossed, while our horses swam to the other shore. The waters being up, we were compelled to travel an old road over the mountains. Night came on—I was ready to faint with a violent headache—the mountain was steep on both sides. I prayed to the Lord for help; presently a profuse sweat broke out upon me, and my fever entirely subsided. About nine o'clock we came to Grear's. After taking a little rest here, we set out next morning for Brother Coxe's on Holstein River. I had trouble enough; our route lay through the woods, and my pack-horse would neither follow, lead, nor drive, so fond was he of stopping to feed on the green herbage. I tried the lead, and he pulled back. I tied his head up to prevent his grazing, and he ran back; the weather was excessively warm. I was much fatigued, and my temper not a little tried. I fed at Smith's, and prayed with the family. Arriving at the river, I was at a loss what to do; but providentially, a man came along who conducted me across. This has been an awful journey to me.

In due time he came to Keywoods, near Saltville, in South-western Virginia, about twenty miles from Abingdon. "Here," says the Bishop, "we held Conference three days, and I preached each day. The weather was cold; the room without fire and otherwise uncomfortable." Here that noble leader, John Tunnell, mustered in his picket forces, among whom are Jeremiah Mastin—lately a companion of Hope Hull on the Pedee—and Thomas Ware, last seen on the Eastern Shore. Ogden and Haw and Wilson Lee, from more distant Kentucky, doubtless came through

the wilderness to attend this first ultramontane Conference. The day after adjournment Asbury briefly rested at General Russell's, "a most kind family in deed and in truth," and the line of travel was resumed (May 15) for Petersburg, where the Virginia and North Carolina preachers meet the middle of June. The list of quarterly-meetings along the devious way shows that the Church is pretty well established. The journal for May 23d says: "A damp, rainy day, and I was unwell with a slow fever and pain in my head; however, I rode to Smith's Chapel and preached; and thence to Brother Harrison's, on Dan River, and preached. In the space of one week we have ridden, through rough, mountainous tracts of 'country, about three hundred miles. Brother Poythress, Tunnell, and myself have had some serious views of things, and mature counsels together." We may imagine ourselves in that company. The "mature counsels" doubtless took in the transfer of Poythress from North Carolina—where he had joined them after grand success as elder—to Kentucky, soon to be admitted into the Union as a State. Poythress was to lead there, and advance upon the opening north-western territory. The college (Bethel), for which the Kentuckians had petitioned, entered into the plans. He observes of the Conference at Petersburg, June 13: "The towns-folk were remarkably kind and attentive. All things were brought on in love. I preached a pastoral sermon under a large arbor near the borders of the town with considerable consolation."

On the last day of June, the Bishop "came to Greenbrier," heading for Uniontown, Pennsylvania, where Whatcoat and Phœbus, Matson and their fellow-laborers, had made things ready for the first Conference of the Redstone region:

July 10.—We had to cross the Alleghany Mountain again, at a bad passage. Our course lay over mountains and through valleys, and the mud and mire were such as might scarcely be expected in December. We came to an old, forsaken habitation in Tygers Valley; here our horses grazed about, while we boiled our meat; midnight brought us up at Jones's, after riding forty or perhaps fifty miles. The old man, our host, was kind enough to wake us up at four o'clock in the morning. We journeyed on through devious lonely wilds, where no food might be found, except what grew in the woods, or was carried with us. We met with two women who were going to see their friends, and to attend the quarterly-meeting at Clarksburg. Near midnight we stopped at A.'s, who hissed his dogs at us; but the women were determined to get to quarterly-meeting, so we went in. Our supper was tea. Brothers Phœbus and Cook took to the woods; old — gave up his bed to the women. I lay along the floor on a few deer skins with the fleas. That

night our poor horses got no corn, and next morning they had to swim across the Monongahela; after a twenty miles' ride we came to Clarksburg, and man and beast were so outdone that it took us ten hours to accomplish it. There attended about seven hundred people, to whom I preached with freedom; and I believe the Lord's power reached the hearts of some. After administering the sacrament, I was well satisfied to take my leave. We rode thirty miles to Father Haymond's, after three o'clock, Sunday afternoon, and made it nearly eleven before we came in; about midnight we went to rest, and rose at five o'clock next morning. My mind has been severely tried under the great fatigue endured both by myself and my horse. O how glad should I be of a plain, clean plank to lie on, as preferable to most of the beds; and where the beds are in a bad state, the floors are worse. The gnats are almost as troublesome here as the mosquitoes in the lowlands of the seaboard. This country will require much work to make it tolerable. The people are, many of them, of the boldest class of adventurers, and with some the decencies of civilized society are scarcely regarded. The preaching of Antinomians poisons them with error in doctrine. Good moralists they are not, and good Christians they cannot be, unless they are better taught.

The Bishop comforted himself with the reflection that we "must take the people as we find them, and make them better;" and that other axiom of his, "Those who *serve* the poor must also *suffer* with them."

His journal is very brief. As has been well remarked, he was too busy making history to write it: "July 22.—Our Conference began at Uniontown, and our counsels were marked by love and prudence. We had seven members of Conference, and five probationers." The Conference occupied three days. The first ultramontane ordination, so far as history is written, occurred here. James Quinn, then a young preacher, destined to wide and permanent usefulness, witnessed the session, and thus alludes to it:

Mr. Asbury officiated, not in the costume of the lawn-robed prelate, but as the plain presbyter in gown and band, assisted by Richard Whatcoat, elder, in the same clerical habit. The person ordained was Michael Leard, of whom it was said that he could repeat nearly the whole of the New Testament from memory, and also large portions of the Old. The scenes of that day looked well in the eyes of the Church people, for not only did the preachers appear in sacerdotal robes, but the morning service was read as abridged by Mr. Wesley. The priestly robes and prayer-book were, however, soon laid aside at the same time, for I have never seen the one nor heard the other since.

Accompanied by Whatcoat, Bishop Asbury recrossed the mountains and recruited at Capon and Bath, preaching two Sundays at the latter watering-place: "August 17.—I attempted to preach at Bath on the lame and the blind; the discourse was very *lame*; and it may be I left my hearers as I found them—*blind*. I am now



closely engaged in reading, writing, and prayer—my soul enjoys much of God. We have great rains, and are obliged to keep close house; but we have a little of almost every thing to improve the mind—the languages, divinity, grammar, history, and *belles-lettres*; my great desire is to improve in the best things.”

He takes a turn at Hebrew and New Testament Greek, as well as at Mosheim and practical divinity, and then resumes the road, by the way of endless quarterly-meetings, for Baltimore, where Conference meets in September: “Thursday, 4.—I preached at Leesburg, and was very warm on ‘Thou wilt arise and favor Zion;’ and the people appeared to be somewhat stirred up. To-day I received a letter from Brother Tunnell, informing of the spreading of the work of God in the West New River, and several parts of North Carolina. Glory be to God, for his great and glorious power! Wednesday, 10.—Our Conference began in Baltimore. I chose not to preach while my mind was clogged by business with so many persons, and on so many subjects. Sunday, 14.—I felt considerably moved at our own church in the morning, and in the Dutch church in the afternoon; the Spirit of the Lord came among the people, and sinners cried aloud for mercy; perhaps not less than twenty souls found the Lord from that time until the Tuesday following.”

Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday were spent at Cokesbury in examining and arranging the temporal concerns of the college. He is now in the land of roads and ferries, and it is easy going. The next Sundays have their record in the journal: “September 21.—I preached with some satisfaction, morning and evening, in Philadelphia. On Monday our Conference began, and held until Friday, 26.” Since Thomas Rankin held a “little Conference” there, Philadelphia had not seen one till now. “Sunday, 28.—Preached with some assistance in Elizabethtown. Monday, 29.—Rode to New York. Next day (Tuesday, 30) our Conference began, and continued until Saturday.” This was the first Conference in New York; so slowly did Methodism extend in that part of the United States. North and east of New Rochelle it had barely been heard of. It was time to move in that direction. Henry Willis, so well known in South Carolina, was made elder of New York and Long Island. Freeborn Garrettson was transferred from Maryland, and directed by Bishop Asbury, at this session, to take charge of nine young itinerants, and place

them on circuits, from New York City to Lake Champlain. It was a grand campaign, and he was the right man to lead it. But its greatness gave him much anxiety. He was unacquainted with the country, and an entire stranger to its inhabitants. It affected his dreams. He says: "It seemed as if the whole country up the North River, as far as Lake Champlain, east and west, was open to my view." He gave his young men instructions where to begin, and how to form their circuits. He would go before them to the extreme parts of the field, and, on his return, hold their quarterly-meetings. This was the way Methodist ministers in those days exhibited their prowess and confidence in success. Six circuits were formed from New Rochelle to Lake Champlain; and Garrettson led the way up Hudson River. "On his return he found that his itinerants were almost everywhere prevailing over opposition, and forming Societies."

The entertainment of an Annual Conference was a great event for old John Street Church. That Society was at some expense, as the steward's account book shows, to prepare for the occasion. "Green baize" and "red marine" draperies were obtained for the chapel. About fifty dollars were expended for it. "The church was cleaned for the occasion. There were sundry expenses at the time of the Conference, and they footed the bills," besides taking care of the Bishop's two horses, and presenting him with a new bridle.

After setting things in order at this northern outpost, Asbury turned and preached his way back through New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina. His journal, full of observations and events, has this entry on February 13, 1789: "Rode forty-five miles to Wappataw; and next day arrived in Charleston in sweet peace of soul." A week later: "I was closely employed in making my plan, and arranging the papers for Conference. I made out a register of all the preachers on the continent who bore the name of Methodists." The summing up of the year gives: Preachers one hundred and sixty-six, white members thirty thousand eight hundred and nine, colored members six thousand five hundred and forty-five.

The *grand round* has been made, and the Bishop returns to the point whence he set out eleven months before. Truth has been preached, ministers enlisted and ordained, and lines of moral empire mapped out. He rests a while in South Carolina.

Asbury's journal makes frequent and affectionate mention of Rembert Hall. There was need of such a place for him. One of his successors, Bishop Wightman, who, as a circuit preacher there, knew the place and people well, thus describes it: "The proprietor of this estate, James Rembert, Esq., was a Methodist gentleman, in Sumter District, of large property, who was strongly attached to Asbury. There was a room in his mansion that was appropriated to the Bishop's use. Here he commonly spent a week during his annual visitation to South Carolina. It was a sweet haven, where the weather-beaten sailor found quiet waters, and bright skies, and a season of repose. Here he brought up his journal, wrote his letters, and lectured of an evening to the family and visitors and crowds of servants. Mrs. Rembert was a lady of the kindest heart; she not only had the Bishop's apartment always ready and commodiously furnished, but every year her seamstress made up for him a full supply of linen, which, neatly ironed, awaited the arrival of the Bishop. Rembert Hall, in my time on the Sumter Circuit (1831), was occupied by Caleb Rembert, Esq., his honored father and mother having long before gone to heaven."

[The Histories of Jesse Lee and of Bangs; Biographical Sketches; Stevens's History of the Methodist Episcopal Church; Smith's History of Methodism in Georgia; and Asbury's Journal, furnish the materials for this Chapter.]

## CHAPTER XXVII.

The Sunday Service—Cokesbury College—Slavery and Emancipation—A New Term of Communion Proposed—How Received—West India Missions—Inconsistent and Hurtful Legislation—What Methodism has Done for the Negro.

THE change of the American Colonies into independent States was instantly felt in the development of the country. A similar result, in the Church, followed the Christmas Conference. Organized and equipped for their work, the itinerants went forth from Baltimore. An inspiring prospect was before them. Bishop Coke proceeded to Philadelphia and New York, to superintend the publication of his ordination-sermon and of the Minutes of the Conference. Though no journal of its doings, in the usual form, was published, its enactments were embodied in a little volume styled a "Form of Discipline for the Ministers, Preachers, and other Members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America."

The "Sunday Service" prepared and printed by Wesley was used, but not uniformly. Jesse Lee who, in Cromwell's time would have been a Puritan, says: "At this time the prayer-book, as revised by Mr. Wesley, was introduced among us; and in the large towns, and in some country-places, our preachers read prayers on the Lord's-day; and in some cases the preachers read part of the morning service on Wednesdays and Fridays. But some of the preachers, who had been long accustomed to pray extempore, were unwilling to adopt this new plan. Being fully satisfied that they could pray better and with more devotion while their eyes were shut than they could with their eyes open. After a few years the prayer-book was laid aside, and has never been used since in public worship." \*

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\* The General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in 1866 (New Orleans), ordered the Sunday Service reprinted "for any congregation that may choose to use it." The reprint was made at the Publishing House (Nashville, 1867; 12mo, 125 pages), under the editorship of Rev. T. O. Summers, D.D., with great care, from the second edition that was printed on Wesley's press in 1786. It has not had a large demand. The General Conference of 1784, in the language of Whatcoat, "agreed to form a Methodist Episcopal Church, in which the Liturgy (as presented by the Rev. John Wesley) should be read."

The merits of this abridgment have been generally acknowledged. According to one of the best judges, "it includes the very quintessence of the English Liturgy in the best possible form." Wesley says in his preface that the principal alterations of the Common Prayer of the Church of England, are these:

"1. Most of the holy days (so called) are omitted, as at present answering no valuable end.

"2. The service of the Lord's-day, the length of which has been complained of, is considerably shortened.

"3. Some sentences in the office of baptism and for the burial of the dead are omitted.

"4. And many Psalms left out, and many parts of the others, as being highly improper for the mouths of a Christian congregation."

Concerning another usage our Virginia historian, of puritanic leanings, testifies that it was of limited and brief observance among Methodists: "The superintendents and some of the elders introduced the custom of wearing gowns and bands, but it was opposed by many of the preachers, as well as private members, who looked upon it as needless and superfluous. Having made a stand against it, after a few years it was given up, and has never been introduced among us since."

Coke spent five months in the United States, after the Church was organized, laboring incessantly. At the site he "gave orders that the materials for the erection of the college should be procured forthwith;" but he left for Europe before preparations were completed to lay the corner-stone. On Sunday, 5th of June, 1785, Asbury laid, with solemn forms, the corner-stone of Cokesbury College, at Abingdon, Maryland. So early as 1780, John Dickins arranged with him, as has already been recorded, the plan of a Methodist academic institution. At his first interview with Coke, at Barratt's Chapel, Asbury submitted the proposition and it was approved. The Christmas Conference directed that it should be immediately attempted as a collegiate establishment. Nearly five thousand dollars was quickly raised for the purpose. The site, about twenty-five miles from Baltimore, was one of the most commanding in the State; magnificent views extend in some directions twenty, in others fifty miles. The landscapes of the Susquehanna Valley lie on either side of the river, and the Chesapeake Bay stretches away in the distance.

“Attired in his long silk gown,” says his biographer, “and with his flowing bands, the pioneer Bishop of America took his position on the walls of the college, and announced for his text the following: ‘The sayings of old which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, showing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done.’”

John Dickins published a description of the building in 1789: “The college is one hundred and eight feet in length from east to west, and forty feet in breadth from north to south, and stands on the summit and center of six acres of land, with an equal descent and proportion of ground on each side.” At this time it had thirty students within its unfinished walls. A preparatory school of fifteen students had been opened under its roof by a Quaker, an excellent teacher. Abingdon became a favorite resort for families desiring the advantages of a good school. It accommodated the Conference in 1786; it has happened, indeed, that the Baltimore Conference, beginning its session in the city, adjourned to Cokesbury College for the conclusion of its deliberations; and this, more than once.

Asbury solicited funds to build and furnish and carry on this new Kingswood. The Conference collections for it were respectable, year after year. Great was the burden and care; and now and then results seemed ready to repay them. Stating the object and expectations of the institution, it was said: “It will be expected that all our friends who send their children to the college will, if they be able, pay a moderate sum for their education and board; the rest will be taught and boarded, and, if our finances will allow of it, clothed gratis. The institution is also intended for the benefit of our young men who are called to preach, that they may receive a measure of that improvement which is highly expedient as a preparative for public service. The college will be under the presidentship of the superintendents of our Church for the time being, and is to be supported by yearly collections throughout our circuits, and any endowments which our friends may think proper to give and bequeath.”

During its ten years' history, Cokesbury College acquired a respectable fame. It was a favorite resort of the itinerants, and creditable to the Church. It was destroyed by fire, December 7, 1795. Asbury was in Charleston, South Carolina, when he

received the news; he wrote in his journal: "We have now a second and confirmed account that Cokesbury College is consumed to ashes, a sacrifice of £10,000 in about ten years. If any man should give me £10,000 per year to do and suffer again what I have done for that house, I would not do it. The Lord called not Mr. Whitefield nor the Methodists to build colleges. I wished only for schools—Dr. Coke wanted a college. I feel distressed at the loss of the library."

The impression made on the English preachers by their American brethren is worthy of notice. When Whatcoat and Vasey heard some of them, at the General Conference, they were surprised, and declared that they had not heard their equal in the British Connection, except Wesley and Fletcher.

Nelson Reed's word-encounter with "the little Doctor," at one of the early Baltimore Conferences, is thus told by an old member of the body:

Nelson Reed commanded great attention as a preacher. He had a strong, round, full but not very melodious voice; and I presume he never found himself in any audience where it was not easy for him to make himself heard to the extreme limit. His sermons were generally argumentative and thoroughly wrought, and seemed to require not much of passion in the delivery. He was deeply versed in the science of theology, having given to it a large amount of study, and from his rich stores of Biblical and theological knowledge he drew largely in every sermon that he preached. He used to be called by a homely nickname, which, however, in that part of the country indicated the high estimation in which he was held; it was nothing more nor less than the "bacon-and-greens preacher," by which it was intended to be understood that his preaching was of the most substantial and nourishing character. I remember to have heard of an incident in the earlier history of Mr. Reed that may serve to illustrate his remarkable fearlessness and energy. It occurred in the Conference which was then holding its session in Baltimore. Dr. Coke, one of the superintendents of the Church, was present; and one of the striking features of his character was that he was impatient of contradiction, and not wholly insensible to his own personal importance. He had on this occasion introduced some proposition in the General Conference, which seemed to some of the preachers a little dictatorial; and one of them, an Irishman, by the name of Matthews, who had been converted in his native country from Romanism, and had fled to this country from an apprehension that his life was in danger at home, sprung to his feet, and cried out, "Popery, popery, popery!" Dr. Coke rebuked the impulsive rudeness of Matthews, when he replied in his Irish manner, "Och!" and sat down. While the Conference was now in a state of great suspense and agitation, Dr. Coke seized the paper containing his own resolution, and, tearing it up, not in the most moderate manner, looked round upon the preachers, and said, "Do you think yourselves equal to me?" Nelson Reed instantly rose, and turning to Bishop Asbury, who was also present,

said: "Dr. Coke has asked whether we think ourselves equal to him; I answer, Yes, we do think ourselves equal to him, notwithstanding he was educated at Oxford, and has been honored with the degree of Doctor of Laws; and more than that, we think ourselves equal to Dr. Coke's king." The Doctor now rose, with his passion entirely cooled off, and said, very blandly, "He is hard upon me." Bishop Asbury replied, "I told you that our preachers are not blockheads." The Doctor then asked pardon of the Conference for his abrupt and impulsive demonstration, and thus the matter ended.

The General Rules as drawn up by the Wesleys were adopted without alteration by the first Societies in America. However, they were not published in any edition of the "Discipline" until 1789, when this clause of prohibition appears for the first time: "The buying or selling the bodies and souls of men, women, or children, with an intention to enslave them." By whom or how this clause was introduced, history does not tell. It clearly refers to the African slave-trade, which the laws of the Republic repressed, as piracy, from the year 1808.

The first allusion to emancipation occurs in an informal Conference called to meet in Baltimore 1780; in anticipation of the regular session which met in Virginia, and which had been committed to the "ordinances."—"Question: Ought not this Conference to require those traveling preachers who hold slaves to give promises to set them free? Answer: Yes." The language is emphatic, but advisory, as to the membership: "We pass our disapprobation on all our friends who keep slaves, and advise their freedom."\* Though the Baltimore section represented a minority of the traveling preachers, the anti-slavery element had strong representatives in the other section, which met at Manakintown, notably—James O'Kelley; and doubtless this deliverance of the minority would have been agreeable to a majority of the united body. The sentiment of freedom for all men, at that time, prevailed extensively with Americans; they had just come out of a fight for freedom. Wesleyan preachers especially shared in the anti-slavery feeling; and not a few cases of emancipation occurred as they pressed their views upon the consciences of Christian masters who were accustomed to regard them as spiritual guides.

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\* It is barely possible that *policy* dictated the introduction of this measure, at this time. The division of American Methodism, on "ordinances," seemed almost a certainty; and this plank in the platform might secure, from the other side, Gatch, O'Kelly, and others like them, whose emancipation sentiments were strong and pronounced.



Others took the ground of Pauline casuistry: "Neither if we emancipate, are we the better; neither if we emancipate not, are we the worse." They saw the question of slavery not in an abstract but in a concrete form. It was a part of social life, as it had come down to them. It was wrought into domestic and industrial institutions, and was recognized and regulated by civil law. If they could have formed a community or State on theory, slavery would not have entered into it; it was an evil which they would have <sup>1</sup>recluded by choice and on policy. But for a hundred and fifty years the ships of Bristol and Liverpool and Boston had been unloading captive slaves upon the shores of what is now the United States; and the unquestioned usages of Christian kings and governments, of Churches and ministers and people, had wrought them into the fabric of the community. In the language of the historian Bancroft, the institution had been "riveted by the policy of England, without regard to the interests or the wishes of the colony."

While there was abhorrence of the cruel cupidity that incited clannish wars on the Dark Continent, for the purpose of capturing barbarians and slaves there, to transport them into slavery here, the question remained for Christian men at the close of the eighteenth century: "What is the best thing now to be done?" To return the negroes to their native land required more ships than all Christian nations owned—leaving out of view a repetition of the modified horrors of the middle passage. Few would assert that they were prepared for self-support and self-government, and fewer still that half-reclaimed pagans could be benefited by being remanded into paganism. There was no provision for colonizing them on the American continent, and no proposition to enfranchise them as citizens. An impassable gulf stood in the way of a general amalgamation. Here and there a master might impatiently or conscientiously wash his hands of the great evil, and put an end to all questionings, so far as he was concerned, by an act of emancipation; but what of a universal law and movement in that direction?

A few well-meaning ecclesiastics, mostly without homes, without property, and without families, think a resolution of Conference or a clause in the Discipline can meet the case! No doubt they were honest; and no doubt their advice was declined by many who were equally honest; with this disadvantage in

the case of the latter—they were more exposed to the suspicion, and not unfrequently to the charge, of making up their judgment under the bias of self-interest. When Coke, immediately after the adjournment of Conference, was pressing its rash rules on emancipation, he met the pious Jarratt, who ventured to question the wisdom of the ecclesiastical action on the subject. “The secret is,” says Coke, that “he has twenty-four slaves of his own; I am afraid he will do infinite hurt by his opposition to our rules.” If slave-holding be a sin, condemned by the Bible, then might emancipation be not only *advised* but *required* by the Church, of all preachers and private members as well. But many Christians never could be convinced of this, with the Bible before them; hence the endless troubles and disputes that worried and divided the Church in America. A slave-holding local preacher, disciplined by Wesley himself, established the first Methodist Society in the Western Hemisphere.\* A better ordered Christian family was not to be found on the continent than at Perry Hall, in which it is likely the rules on emancipation were prepared for the approaching Christmas by four or five worthy Englishmen, three-fourths of whom had not been in the United States quite two months. All Methodist history, all Bible history as well, demonstrates that Christian character of the finest and fullest type may be developed in Christian masters.

The traveling preachers and private members having been legislated for, the local preachers are reached at the regular Conference held in May, 1784.—“Question: What shall we do with our local preachers who will not emancipate their slaves in the States where the laws admit it? Answer: Try those in Virginia another year, and suspend the preachers in Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey.”

• The extraordinary enactments of the Christmas Conference on this perplexing subject are here presented in full:

Question: What methods can we take to extirpate slavery?

Answer: We are deeply conscious of the impropriety of making new terms of communion for a religious society already established, excepting on the most pressing occasion; and such we esteem the practice of holding our fellow-creatures in slavery. We view it as contrary to the golden law of God on which hang all the

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\* The true epoch of Methodism in the Western Hemisphere is 1760, when Gilbert formed the first Society at Antigua. Had its centenary been observed, all Methodists of the New World could have shared in its celebration, an advantage which the epoch of the Church, in neither the North American British provinces nor in the United States, admits. (Stevens's History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Vol. II., page 379.)

law and the prophets, and the inalienable rights of mankind, as well as every principle of the Revolution, to hold in the deepest debasement, in a more abject slavery than is perhaps to be found in any part of the world except America, so many souls that are all capable of the image of God.

We therefore think it our most bounden duty to take immediately some effectual method to extirpate this abomination from among us; and for that purpose we add the following to the rules of our Society, viz.:

1. Every member of our Society who has slaves in his possession shall, within twelve months after notice given to him by the assistant (which notice the assistants are required immediately, and without any delay, to give in their respective circuits), legally execute and record an instrument whereby he emancipates and sets free every slave in his possession who is between the ages of forty and forty-five immediately, or at farthest when they arrive at the age of forty-five; and every slave who is between the ages of twenty-five and forty immediately, or at farthest at the expiration of five years from the date of said instrument; and every slave who is between the ages of twenty and twenty-five immediately, or at farthest when they arrive at the age of thirty; and every slave under the age of twenty as soon as they arrive at the age of twenty-five at farthest; and every infant born in slavery after the above-mentioned rules are complied with immediately on its birth.

2. Every assistant shall keep a journal, in which he shall regularly minute down the names and ages of all the slaves belonging to all the masters in his respective circuit, and also the date of every instrument executed and recorded for the manumission of the slaves, with the name of the court, book, and folio in which the said instruments respectively shall have been recorded; which journal shall be handed down in each circuit to the succeeding assistants [pastors].

3. In consideration that these rules form a new term of communion, every person concerned who will not comply with them shall have liberty quietly to withdraw himself from our Society within the twelve months succeeding the notice given as aforesaid; otherwise the assistant shall exclude him in the Society.

4. No person so voluntarily withdrawn, or so excluded, shall ever partake of the Supper of the Lord with the Methodists, till he complies with the above requisitions.

5. No person holding slaves shall, in future, be admitted into Society or to the Lord's Supper, till he previously complies with these rules concerning slavery.

*N. B.*—These rules are to affect the members of our Society no farther than as they are consistent with the laws of the States in which they reside. And respecting our brethren in Virginia that are concerned, and after due consideration of their peculiar circumstances, we allow them two years from the notice given, to consider the expedience of compliance or non-compliance with these rules.

How different are these rules from those with which the apostles of our Lord were sent forth to convert the world! It has been well remarked: "When Paul and Barnabas set out on their missionary tour through slave-holding Greece, they went unhampered with such instructions about slavery; but the children were wiser than the fathers, and it required the experience of a few sad years to teach Asbury and his associates that both

master and slave would perish if they persisted in their course." As to the method others pursued there is no record, but Coke improved the opportunity of large Virginia audiences to expound and defend the new rules and the new terms of membership, unknown alike to Methodism and the New Testament. "The quarterly-meetings on this continent," he writes "are much attended. The brethren for twenty miles around, and sometimes for thirty or forty, meet together. The meeting always lasts two days. All the traveling preachers in the circuit are present, and they, with perhaps a local preacher or two, give the people a sermon one after another, besides the love-feast, and now the sacrament. On Saturday, April 9th, I set off with the friends to Brother Martin's, in whose barn I preached that day. The next day I administered the sacrament to a large company, and preached, and after me the two traveling preachers. There were thirty strangers, I think, in Brother Martin's house only, which obliged us to lie three in a bed. I had now for the first time a very little persecution. The testimony I bore in this place against slave-holding provoked many of the unawakened to retire out of the barn, and combine together to flog me (so they expressed it) as soon as I came out."

He passed on to North Carolina to meet Asbury, coming up from Charleston, at the Annual Conference at Green Hill's. When he reached North Carolina, finding that the laws of the State even then forbade emancipation, he exercised a prudence unusual with him, and preached simply the gospel; but the Conference, through his influence, passed the most decided resolutions on the subject, and insisted that the Church should take earnest measures to secure immediate emancipation. These resolutions accomplished nothing except to throw more serious obstacles in the way of the already embarrassed preachers.

As soon as the session was over, Coke returned into Virginia. "On Sunday, May 1," he says, "about twenty preachers met Mr. Asbury and me at Brother Mason's. One night we all slept at the same house, but it was so inconvenient to some of the preachers that they afterward divided themselves through the neighboring plantations, by which we lost about an hour in the mornings. A great many principal friends met us here to insist on a repeal of the slave rules; but when they found that we had thoughts of withdrawing ourselves entirely from the circuit, on

account of the violent spirit of some leading men, they drew in their horns, and sent us a very humble letter, entreating that preachers might be appointed."

Asbury's note on the same occasion is brief: "Rode to W. Mason's, where we are to meet in Conference. I found the minds of the people greatly agitated with our rules against slavery and a proposed petition to the General Assembly for the emancipation of the blacks. Colonel ——— and Doctor Coke disputed on the subject, and the Colonel used some threats; next day, Brother O'Kelley let fly at them, and they were made angry enough; we, however, came off with whole bones."

It is possible that what Coke, in his impetuous mood, mistook for a drawing in of their horns, on the part of the many principal members, meant something else. They saw that he was not to be reasoned with, and took other measures for saving the Church from ruin. June 1st, the last and most influential Conference for the year met at Baltimore. That was the place to make a final stand—where six months before the "slave rules" had been adopted. The preachers who had been abroad among the Societies and people then brought in a report of the damaging effect and well-ascertained impracticability of the said rules; and Coke himself, in the chair, made a virtue of necessity by conceding to their final repeal. Accordingly, in the Annual Minutes for 1785 the following notice was inserted: "It is recommended to all our brethren to suspend the execution of the minute on slavery till the deliberations of a future Conference; and that an equal space of time be allowed all our members for consideration, when the minute shall be put in force." \*

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\* Now was their sublime hour, and the critical hour of the nation, in respect to this question. But they failed, and history must not evade the fact. They were persecuted and threatened, and sometimes mobbed; but many of their people, many slave-holders, sustained them. Emancipations were becoming frequent. The leading statesmen of the nation were with them in opinion. But Asbury and Coke both shrunk before the unavoidable difficulties of the question. It was natural that, in after years, they should believe it had been expedient to compromise with their opponents. (Stevens's *History of the Methodist Episcopal Church*.)

The distinguished author viewed this abolition crisis from an extremely Northern stand-point. Those who contemplate it from almost any other point of view are satisfied that, had the policy so promptly abandoned been persisted in, there would have been no Methodism in the Southern States. At that time there was very little anywhere else in America. And so, Methodism would have been abolished in the United States as the first result of abolitionism.

Asbury's note on that occasion is this: "June 1.—Our Conference began. I was unwell during the session; a blister running, applied for a pain in my breast. On Thursday the Doctor took his leave of America for this visit. We parted with heavy hearts. On Friday we rested from our labors and had a love-feast."

Coke sailed out of the harbor "with feelings sadder than he had for years experienced in taking leave of his ministerial brethren," and was absent two years.

Methodism, after this instructive experience of being wise above what is written, attended, for awhile without distraction, to her heavenly calling and greatly prospered; so that in the fourth year after the episcopal organization her ministry and membership were doubled, and the territory occupied was more than quadrupled. "The vexed question" was let alone; and in the Annual Minutes for 1787 the following timely and scriptural directions are found. Well would it have been for the Church and the country, and especially for the colored people, if all subsequent Conference action had been of the same nature:

What directions shall we give for the promotion of the spiritual welfare of the colored people?

We conjure all our ministers and preachers, by the love of God, and the salvation of souls, and do require them, by all the authority that is invested in us, to leave nothing undone for the spiritual benefit and salvation of them, within their respective circuits or districts; and for this purpose to embrace every opportunity of inquiring into the state of their souls, and to unite in Society those who appear to have a real desire of fleeing from the wrath to come; to meet such in class, and to exercise the whole Methodist discipline among them.

Asbury was now left alone in the episcopal care. That an Englishman should become so thoroughly Americanized is not a common thing. With strange impressions as he approached the shores of the New World, he exclaimed, "This is the land for me!" At the close of the war, writing to his old friend and fellow-laborer, George Shadford, he used this language:

I travel four thousand miles in a year, all weathers, among rich and poor Dutch and English. O my dear Shadford, it would take a month to write out and speak what I want you to know. The most momentous is my constant communion with God as *my* God; my glorious victory over the world and the devil. I am continually with God. I preach frequently, and with more enlargement of heart than ever. O America, America! it certainly will be the glory of the world for religion. I have loved and do love America. Your old national pride, as a people, has got a blow. You must abate a little. O let us haste in peace and holiness to the king-

dom of peace and love, where we shall know, love, and enjoy God and each other, and all the differences in Church and State, and among private Christians, will be done away.

Asbury's bearing toward his senior colleague is one of the most interesting exhibitions of his character. He saw the weak points of Coke, and did what he could, quietly and delicately, to lessen the consequence of his blunders; but he also appreciated his piety, and paid respectful tribute to his learning and true greatness. We are reminded of the brave Braddock, who, when pushing his way into the wilderness, was modestly expostulated with by one Colonel George Washington, who knew the country and was practically acquainted with the business in hand. "What!" was the disdainful reply, "shall an American buckskin teach a British general how to fight?" The haughty commander was soon borne back on a litter, and his name forever associated with defeat.

Coke's missionary character was strongly developed, if not determined, by his American experience. He came in view of, and almost in contact with, Nova Scotia at the Christmas Conference; and during its session made the first collection on our shores for foreign missions, in behalf of that field. He continued his personal solicitations for its support and enlargement, after arriving in Europe, and published an "Address to the Pious and Benevolent," proposing an annual subscription for the support of missionaries, which is said to have been the first document of the kind. He also induced Wesley to send with him to that distant field three preachers—Hammet, Warrener, and Clark—as a reënforcement to Garrettson and his fellow-laborers.

In September, 1786, he embarked with them for Nova Scotia. By storms the ship was driven to the West Indies. The furious captain, having never encountered such perils on the deep, concluded that there was a Jonah on board, and threw Coke's papers and books overboard and was on the point of sending him after them. Providentially they reached Antigua, where Gilbert and Baxter had begun a good work, which was waiting for help. On Christmas-day the missionaries landed at St. Johns, and walking into the town met Baxter on his way to the chapel. Other islands were visited, and the missionaries distributed among them; and thus began the Wesleyan missions in the West Indies, redeeming the slaves from pagan ignorance, and numbering at a later day over fifty thousand communicants, with all the appoint-

ments of districts, circuits, and chapels, and well-appointed and well-supported religious teachers. A very harsh type of bondage prevailed in most of the islands. Preachers were often imprisoned, chapels closed, and negroes punished with severity for their religious profession and attendance; but the cause was God's, and it prevailed—not without martyrs. This mission-field became Coke's half-way house in his visitations to the American Church; and by his exertions and liberality it was not only reënforced and superintended, but his energetic influence with the home government more than once secured relaxations from the severity of the local laws. Charleston was the nearest port, where he arrived in time to join Asbury in the first South Carolina Conference of 1787, and in other sessions afterward.

It was well for the tranquillity of the American Church that Coke had this West India mission thrust upon him. It taught him a prudence in his bearing toward civil institutions, which he had not before shown, where slavery was concerned. If he had entertained public assemblies in Antigua with the same utterances on that subject that were made in Virginia, he would have destroyed the Societies gathered by Gilbert twenty years before. If the emancipation statute enacted at Baltimore had been proposed in Jamaica, the door to his missionaries would have been fast closed, and that noble chapter of negro salvation that adorns the history of Wesleyan Methodism would never have been written. In his transient visits of a few months to this continent, and passing rapidly from place to place, it was cheap and easy for him to indulge in quixotic schemes of philanthropy, and to stir up opposition—leaving Asbury and his patient and suffering colaborers to meet the consequences, and by their wise conservatism to save the imperiled cause; but when Coke came personally and practically face to face with the problem involved, and must choose between salvation and emancipation, he took the better course; for where his pragmatic temper did not mislead him, he was a wise man, and none could doubt his being a pious one.

About the year 1830, Richard Watson wrote the "Instructions to the Wesleyan Missionaries"—an official document worthy of the broad-minded author of the "Institutes" and of the Church whose missions are enlightening the world. Wise and holy men have characterized the "Instructions" as "apostolical." In all controversies—sectional, political, and ecclesiastical—for these



hundred years, the spirit and practice of these "Instructions" have governed that portion of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America who have really done any thing to promote the moral and religious welfare of negro slaves. We quote from this official document; it is worthy of careful perusal:

Those of you who are appointed to the West India colonies—being placed in stations of considerable delicacy, and which require from the state of society there a peculiar circumspection and prudence on the one hand, and zeal, diligence, and patient perseverance on the other—are required to attend the following directions, as especially applicable to your mission there:

Your particular designation is to endeavor the religious instruction and conversion of the ignorant, pagan, and neglected black and colored population of the island or station to which you may be appointed, and of all others who may be willing to hear you.

Where Societies are already formed, you are required to watch over them with the fidelity of those who must give up their account to Him who hath purchased them with his blood, and in whose providence they are placed under your care. Your labors must be constantly directed to improve them in the knowledge of Christianity, and to enforce upon them the experience and practice of its doctrines and duties, without intermingling doubtful controversies in your administrations, being mainly anxious that those over whom you have pastoral care should clearly understand the principal doctrines of the Scriptures, feel their renovating influence upon their hearts, and become "holy in all manner of conversation and godliness."

It is enforced upon you that you continue no person as a member of your Societies whose "conversation is not as becometh the gospel of Christ." That any member of Society who may relapse into his former habits, and become a polygamist, or an adulterer, who shall be idle and disorderly, disobedient to his owner (if a slave), who shall steal, or be in any other way immoral or irreligious, shall be put away, after due admonition, and proper attempts to reclaim him from the "error of his way."

Before you receive any person into Society, you shall be satisfied of his desire to become acquainted with the religion of Christ, and to obey it; and if he has not previously been under Christian instruction, nor baptized, you are, before his admission as a member, diligently to teach him the Christian faith, and the obligations which he takes upon himself by baptism.

You are to consider the children of the negroes and colored people of your Societies and congregations as a part of your charge; and it is recommended to you, wherever it is practicable and prudent, to establish Sunday or other schools for their instruction.

As in the colonies in which you are called to labor a great proportion of the inhabitants are in a state of slavery, the committee most strongly call to your recollection what was so fully stated to you when you were accepted as a missionary to the West Indies—that your only business is to promote the moral and religious improvement of the slaves to whom you may have access, without in the least degree, in public or private, interfering with their civil condition. On all persons, in the state of slaves, you are diligently and implicitly to enforce the same exhor-

tations which the apostles of our Lord administered to the slaves of ancient nations, when by their ministry they embraced Christianity: "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good-will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men; knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free." (Eph. vi. 5-8.) "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God; and whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done; and there is no respect of persons." (Col. iii. 22-25.)

You are directed to avail yourselves of every opportunity to extend your labors among the slaves of the islands where you may be stationed; but you are in no case to visit the slaves of any plantation without the permission of the owner or manager; nor are the times which you may appoint for their religious services to interfere with their owners' employ; nor are you to suffer any protracted meetings in the evening, not even at negro burials, on any account whatever. In all these cases you are to meet even unreasonable prejudices, and attempt to disarm suspicions, however groundless, so far as you can do it consistently with your duties as faithful and laborious ministers of the gospel.

As many of the negroes live in a state of polygamy, or in a promiscuous intercourse of the sexes, your particular exertions are to be directed to the discountenancing and correcting of these vices, by pointing out their evil, both in public and in private, and by maintaining the strictest discipline in the Societies.

The [missionary] committee caution you against engaging in any of the civil disputes or local politics of the colony to which you may be appointed, either verbally or by correspondence with any persons at home or in the colonies. The whole period of your temporary residence in the West Indies is to be filled up with the proper work of your mission.

The sound Christian principles of this document governed the united Methodism of America down to 1844, maugre local factions and temporary exceptions. Thus access was had alike to the master and the slave, by a ministry bearing with them "the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ." And thus, after the jurisdictional division of that date, the section of American Methodism which continued to adhere to these scriptural principles was enabled, under God, to present phenomenal results in the moral and religious culture of "the servile progeny of Ham." Not only were the slaves, who labored and worshiped in contact with the white population, educated and elevated and evangelized to a degree far above any thing attained or attainable in their native land; but to those masses of negroes seg-

regated on the rice and sugar and cotton plantations, under climatic conditions agreeable to their tropical habits but dangerous for white residents, missionaries were sent who, constrained by the love of souls, cheerfully submitted to the social inconveniences and malarious perils of the situation. By their efforts much people was added to the Lord. Chapels were built, and vast congregations of blacks were gathered and ministered to in doctrine and discipline and sacraments. Sunday-schools were formed and catechisms prepared for them, and the children of slaves were taught the truths of Christianity.\*

When Coke landed on the continent, Black Harry, unable to read, was the most advanced specimen of African Christianity he met with. On the general emancipation, effected by the Civil War, Southern Methodism showed thousands of negro preachers, exhorters, and class-leaders, who could read their Bibles and edify their congregations. Many of them were counted, by those who controlled the civil government of that day, fit for legislators and senators.† And when the sons of Wesley, from all parts of the world, gathered at City Road Chapel in Ecumenical Conference, African bishops were there as representative members, who had never seen Africa. They had been born and con-

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\* In 1860, Southern Methodism numbered in its membership 207,766 negroes, and over 180,000 negro children, under catechetical instruction. By a persistent maneuver it has been attempted to shift the odium of slavery upon those with whom it ended, instead of those with whom it began; upon those connected with its only redeeming feature, instead of those whose connection with it was marked alone by lucre and cruelty. At the Convention of Delegates from the thirteen States (Philadelphia), to consult upon the formation of a Constitution, the subject of slavery was referred to two committees successively. The *majority* of the first were *Northern* men. They reported (Aug. 8, 1787) a recommendation that the slave-trade should be legalized perpetually. This committee was composed of five persons—Rutledge, Randolph, Gorman, Ellsworth, and Wilson. The first *two* from the South, the last *three* from the North. The majority of the second were *Southern* men. They recommended that the slave-trade should *not* be extended beyond the year 1800. The committee who reported this amendment consisted of eleven persons—Langdon, King, Johnson, Livingston, Clymer, Dickenson, Martin, Williams, Pinckney, Baldwin, and Madison. The first *five* represented Northern States, the last *six* Southern States. The constitutional provisions on this head would never have prolonged this infamous traffic to the year 1808, if either Massachusetts, or New Hampshire, or Connecticut, had stood by Delaware and Virginia, in that crisis of the country, and like them voted *against* the extension. But the profits of New England's ships had to be protected. (See Stiles's *Modern Reform*.)

† President Lincoln's emancipation proclamation was issued January 1, 1863.

verted and reared in slavery, as modified by Christian influence, and they gratefully acknowledged Methodist ministers as their spiritual benefactors. Their forefathers had been brought over under the decks of the slave-ships of England and New England; *they* went back, from the papilages of Methodism in the slave States, as cabin passengers in steam-ships. Their forefathers had been isolated and *gregarious* worshippers; *they* returned as redeemed Christian men and ministers—the Lord's freedmen. While these black bishops came from the fields of Southern slavery, over which Methodism persisted in her benignant and thankless but successful labors, none were present at that grand synod from the continent of Africa.

Never in the history of the race, if we may rely on the census, did a given number of Africans so multiply and increase as did the negro slaves of the United States for a century following these instant measures of Bishop Coke and his party for emancipation. This speaks for their physical comfort. Never did an equal number of Africans, anywhere else or at any time, attain to an equal intellectual, moral, and religious standard. The heathen Church-membership of all the missionary societies and stations, in all parts of the world, did not equal the colored membership of Methodism in the Southern States. To this may be added the colored membership of the Baptists—only a little below that of the Methodists—and the colored membership of other Churches, which cared for the bond as well as the free, and the problem is furnished approximately with facts for its solution. Humanity, inspired with religious sentiment, views with awe such a continental movement of Providence—transporting one race across the ocean to the home of another to be Christianized, and making the subjection of one to the other the condition of its instruction. The man-stealer and slave-trader meant it for evil, but God meant the relation of master and servant for good. What more is to come of it, we wait the unfolding of hidden things to see.

Some elevated seers profess to have caught a glimpse of the redemption of the Dark Continent, that has defied all other missionary enterprise, by the return of the best portion of its redeemed children. It is for the Church, in the future as in the past, to do the present duty, guided by the plain truths of Divine revelation, and not by the shifting principles of human revolutions: assured that God is no respecter of persons; that all races.

the weak as well as the strong, the black as well as the white, are alike the objects of his fatherly love; and that "the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him."

The unbiased historian of the time coming, who reviews the course of Methodist legislation on slave-holding, will probably give this opinion: If such legislation was founded on scriptural authority, it did not go far enough; if it had no such foundation, it went too far. A law is made for preachers which is not applied to the people, as though a separate moral code existed for each class; also, one part of the land is legislated for to the exclusion of another. Stringent emancipation rules are enacted in 1804, and followed by the clause: "The members of our Societies in the States of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Tennessee shall be exempted from the operation of the above rules." Again—on the last day of the next quadrennial meeting: "Moved from the chair, that there be one thousand Forms of Discipline prepared for the use of the South Carolina Conference, in which the section and rule on slavery be left out. Carried."

In six months, the emancipation enactments of the Christmas Conference were annulled on the spot. Methodism as a broad and beneficent power was thus saved to the kingdom of heaven and to the world. Otherwise, it must have been cut off from the people it has blessed, and would speedily have degenerated into a narrow, fretful combination for social reform, "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

The rescue of the new ecclesiastical organization from such a fate was a mercy to the slave as well as to the master. Natural freedom, sweet as it is, is infinitely unimportant, a mere secular-ity, when compared with that spiritual freedom which God, at so great cost, has provided for every man through the gospel. In God's order, St. Paul being judge, the primary concern and position belongs to soul-emancipation. Let the gospel have free course; and if by its effects upon the master or the servant, or both, the way is prepared for, and the consequence points to, temporal freedom—well. In the meantime to leave the whole subject where the Bible leaves it, and to bring it under the Bible treatment specifically provided, was always the wish of a growing number of American Methodists. But they were in connection, highly prized, with others who earnestly favored and pressed a secular and more aggressive policy; and hence the

language of compromise in the Discipline, and contradictory, inconsistent, varied, and vexing legislation on the subject. After the division of Episcopal Methodism into two independent jurisdictions, each body followed its tendency, and in less than twenty years reached its position. The Northern section, which all the while had numbered more or less slave-holders in its communion, accepted "the new terms of communion" proposed in the Christmas Conference, and in 1864 unqualifiedly made slaveholding a bar to membership. The Southern section, six years before that, had struck out all special legislation on the subject.

Bishop Asbury, avowedly and of conviction an anti-slavery man, looked at the whole subject in a practical light. When he saw how every act of ecclesiastical interference with a civil institution provoked new restrictions and prohibitions by the civil power and blocked up the way of the messengers of peace, he recorded in his journal (Feb. 1, 1809) this matured conviction: "We are defrauded of great numbers by the pains that are taken to keep the blacks from us—their masters are afraid of the influence of our principles. Would not an *amelioration* in the condition and treatment of slaves have produced more practical good to the poor Africans than any attempt at their *emancipation*? The state of society, unhappily, does not admit of this; besides, the blacks are deprived of the means of instruction—who will take the pains to lead them into the way of salvation, and watch over them that they may not stray, but the Methodists? Well; now their masters will not let them come to hear us. What is the personal liberty of the African, which he may abuse, to the salvation of his soul—how may it be compared?"

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

Wesley's Requests not Complied With—Leaving his Name Off the Minutes—The Offense and Rebuke—Methodist Episcopacy the First in America—True to the Primitive Type—Ordinations of Luther and Wesley—Charles Wesley's Death.

WHILE independence was being secured and organized by the Conference of 1784, the importance of union found early expression. Hence this minute: "Question: What can be done in order to the future union of the Methodists? Answer: During the life of the Reverend Mr. Wesley, we acknowledge ourselves his sons in the gospel, ready, in matters belonging to Church-government, to obey his commands. And we do engage after his death to do every thing that we judge consistent with the cause of religion in America, and the political interests of these States, to preserve and promote our union with the Methodists in Europe."

Within three years this engagement was put to a severe test. So well had Freeborn Garrettson acquitted himself in Nova Scotia that Wesley saw in him an instrument needing only to be clothed with large powers for achieving the greatest results, and he sent a request to the Conference (1787) for his ordination as superintendent, or bishop, for the British dominions in America—a diocese comprising not only the north-eastern provinces and the Canadas, but also the West India Islands. Coke, as Wesley's delegate and representative in the matter, asked Garrettson if he would accept the appointment. Garrettson, more surprised than pleased at the affair, writes:

I requested the liberty of deferring my answer until the next day. I think on the next day the Doctor came to my room and asked me if I had made up my mind to accept of my appointment; I told him I had upon certain conditions. I observed to him that I was willing to go on a tour, and visit those parts to which I was appointed, for one year; and if there was a cordiality in the appointment among those whom I was requested to serve, I would return to the next Conference and receive ordination for the office of superintendent. His reply was, "I am perfectly satisfied," and he gave me a recommendatory letter to the brethren in the West Indies, etc. I had intended, as soon as Conference rose, to pursue my voyage to the West India Islands, to visit Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, and in the spring to return. What transpired in the Conference during my absence I know not; but I was astonished, when the appointments were read, to hear my name mentioned to preside in the Peninsula.

The Conference declined to elect him, says one, because if ordained for the Provinces he must be confined wholly to that field; and he was not inclined to expatriate himself. But the true reason seems to have been the unwillingness of his brethren to lose Garrettson. He was retained in the States and returned to his old field of labor and triumph on the Maryland shore, whence, as we have already seen, he was the following year transferred to New York, and planted Methodism in the Hudson Valley. Wesley was disappointed and grieved; nor was this all. At the same time he had directed that Richard Whatcoat be ordained a joint superintendent with Asbury. This was a wise selection, as subsequent events showed; for thirteen years afterward he was chosen, but was too old and feeble then to do justice to himself or the office. The Conference declined compliance in this case also. Jesse Lee's account of the matter is:

When this business was brought before the Conference, most of the preachers would not consent to it. The reasons against it were: (1) that he was not qualified to take the charge of the Connection; (2) that they were apprehensive that if Mr. Whatcoat was ordained, Mr. Wesley would likely recall Mr. Asbury, and he would return to England.

Dr. Coke contended that we were obliged to receive Mr. Whatcoat, because we had said in the Minutes when we were first formed into a Church in 1784: "During the life of the Rev. Mr. Wesley, we acknowledge ourselves his sons in the gospel, ready, in matters belonging to Church government, to obey his commands."

Many of the members argued that they were not at the Conference when that engagement was entered into, and they did not consider themselves bound by it. Other preachers, who had said they were "ready to obey his commands," said they did not feel ready *now* to obey. The preachers at last agreed to depart from that engagement which some of the elder brethren had formerly entered into, and in the next printed Minutes that engagement was left out. They had made the engagement of their own accord, and among themselves, and they believed they had a right to depart therefrom, when they pleased, seeing it was not a contract made with Mr. Wesley, or any other person, but an agreement among themselves. It was further argued that Mr. Wesley, while in England, could not tell what man was qualified to govern us, as well as we could who were present and were to be governed. We believed also that if Mr. Wesley was here himself he would be of the same opinion with us. We then wrote a long and loving letter to Mr. Wesley, and requested him to come over to America and visit his spiritual children.

This step of receding from the above engagement was afterward considered by some disaffected persons as improper. If there was any thing improper in the business, it was in entering into the engagement, and not in departing from it.

Wesley's name was displaced from the next printed Minutes entirely by the omission of this "engagement" clause. It looked



badly, and he was offended at the turn things had taken. How far this casting off of his name and authority might imply a present or future departure from the Founder's principles was not an irrelevant question in his mind. "For this," writes Asbury, "Mr. Wesley blamed me, and was displeased that I did not rather reject the whole Connection, or leave them, if they did not comply. But I could not give up the Connection so easily, after laboring so many years with and for them."

Disaffected persons made sinister use of the fact that in the new edition of the Discipline, which left Wesley's name out, the word *bishop* was used instead of his chosen *superintendent*, as a personal title of Coke and Asbury. The word had been used in the designation of their office from the organization of the Church, and this change, indorsed by the Conferences, was ever afterward continued in the Discipline.\*

In the correspondence of the next year, an "objurgatory epistle" appears, in which Wesley reminds Asbury: "There is indeed a wide difference between the relation wherein you stand to the Americans and the relation wherein I stand to all the Methodists. You are the elder brother of the American Methodists; I am, under God, the father of the whole family." And then he indulges in a sharp rebuke to his son in the gospel:

But, in one point, my dear brother, I am a little afraid, both the Doctor and you differ from me. I study to be little; you study to be great. I creep; you strut along. I found a school; you a college! nay, and call it after your own names! O beware! Do not seek to be something! Let me be nothing, and "Christ be all in all!" One instance of this, your greatness, has given me great concern. How can you, how dare you, suffer yourself to be called bishop? I shudder, I start at the very thought! Men may call me a knave or a fool, a rascal, a scoundrel, and I am content; but they shall never, by my consent, call me *bishop*! For my sake, for God's sake, for Christ's sake, put a full end to this!

The concluding words, "Thus, my dear Franky, I have told you all that is in my heart," are in keeping with the tenor and the purpose of the epistle to rebuke display and the vaulting ambition which some had unjustly laid to Asbury's charge. "Had Mr. Wesley been in America," says a writer of a later day, "and witnessed Mr. Asbury's manner of life, throughout the whole of his

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\* Instead of "Question 1. Who are the superintendents of our Church for the United States? Answer. Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury," the new edition read, "Question 1. Who are the bishops of our Church for the United States? Answer. Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury."

long and arduous ministry in this country, we are confident he never could have expressed himself to that devoted and holy man in the style of this letter. In spirit, in conversation, in deportment, in dress—in short, in whatever pertained to his person, his equipage, and his entire movements—Mr. Asbury was a model of apostolical simplicity; nor was any man, not even Mr. Wesley himself, ever less justly liable to the imputation of strutting than he.”

Wesley had in his eye the airs and pretensions of “the mitred infidels” and lordly prelates of his own land; he was jealous over his American children “with godly jealousy” lest their simplicity of character should be corrupted. He saw in the personal title, the being *called bishop*, pomp and parade, official arrogance and exclusiveness; and recent events had sharpened his pen. This growing independence naturally excited his parental solicitude. “Did he not upon this occasion,” says his chosen English biographer, Moore, “a little forget what he had written in his address to the Societies in America, after their separation from the mother country: ‘They are now at full liberty simply to follow the Scriptures and the primitive Church; and we judge it best that they should stand fast in the liberty wherewith God has so strangely made them free.’”

At the date of this letter, Asbury was making the grand tour of the continent, along which we have followed him in a former chapter, reaching from the sea-shore to the Mississippi Valley, and from Charleston to New York, climbing hills and swimming rivers, ordaining missionaries at their outposts, and setting in order the Churches upon a scale of labor and fatigue and progress unequaled by Wesley himself, because England afforded no equal theater of action—and all on a salary of sixty dollars a year: “soaring, indeed,” as he admits, “but over the tops of the highest mountains.”

The apparent discourtesy and blunder—called in the pamphlet literature of the day “the leaving Mr. Wesley’s name off the American Minutes”—was repaired next year, thus: “Who are the persons that exercise the episcopal office in the Methodist Church in Europe and America? John Wesley, Thomas Coke, and Francis Asbury.” This act of respect was followed by another question and answer, which guarded the exclusive authority of the American Church: “Who have been elected, by the

unanimous suffrages of the General Conference, to superintend the Methodist Connection in America? Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury.”

This matter would hardly have occupied more than a paragraph in history, but for the fact that on this letter, more than on any thing else, the opponents of Methodism have founded their charge that Wesley did not design to establish the American Methodist episcopacy, but that Coke and Asbury exceeded his intentions. Quotations from this letter have been incessantly made, in a form well adapted to produce a false effect, for it can be rightly comprehended only by the plain circumstances of the case. The disingenuous and illogical uses which an episcopal party in this country has endeavored to make of these expressions of Wesley have strangely enough been shared by some seceders from Episcopal Methodism who attempt to convict the two Bishops of usurping an office which Wesley never meant to confer. The history of the whole transaction as already given, and in every material point allowed by these persons, would seem to make argument with them hopeless; with others, of more candid temper, it is needless.

No case can be better made out before a competent tribunal than that John Wesley, upon maturest deliberation and counsel, purposed and took all formal measures to establish and perpetuate an episcopacy for American Methodism, upon a presbyterial basis. Men, according to their notions, may differ and dispute about the sufficiency or the insufficiency of that basis, the scripturalness or the unscripturalness of that transaction; but there can be no reasonable doubt as to what was intended and done. John Wesley belonged to that class of Episcopalians who believe that episcopacy is not a distinct order, but a distinct office, in the ministry; that bishops and presbyters, or elders, are of the same order, and have essentially the same prerogatives; but that, for convenience, some of this order may be raised to the episcopal office, and functions originally pertaining to the whole order—as ordination, for example—may be confined to them. The presbyter thus elevated is but *primus inter pares*—the first among equals.\*

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\* An exhaustive review of the facts connected with, and establishing, Wesley's Episcopal organization of American Methodism may be found in Stevens's History (Vol. II.). This unanswerable argument has properly been made to do service as an Appendix to the American edition of Tyerman's Life of Wesley, correcting the English biographer at a material point.

Richard Watson, in condition to know the initial history of ordinations for the Methodist Episcopal Church, says: "Their episcopacy is founded upon the principle of bishops and presbyters being of the same *degree*—a more extended *office* only being assigned to the former, as in the primitive Church. For though nothing can be more obvious than that the primitive pastors are called bishops or presbyters indiscriminately in the New Testament, yet at an early period those presbyters were, by way of distinction, denominated bishops, who presided in the meetings of the presbyters, and were finally invested with the government of several churches, with their respective presbyteries; so that two *offices* were then, as in this case, grafted upon the same *order*." Mr. Watson adds that "such an arrangement was highly proper for America," and that "the bishops of the Methodist Church in America have in practice as well exemplified the primitive spirit as in principle they were conformed to the primitive discipline."

The following remarks are from an authority little less eminent than the above:

It is clear that the New Testament does not enforce any ecclesiastical code. We have no pattern of the Christian Church given in Mount Zion, as was given to Moses in Horeb; no dimensions, furniture, utensils, priestly robes, specific manner of service, as was the case in the Jewish temple. The simple reason is, Christianity is designed to be universal, to embrace the whole family of man, and to give its light, grace, holiness, and blessings to all the world. How, then, can this system minister its mercy in the same modes? The New Testament furnishes us with great principles, general rules, precedents, and examples, for our guidance; and then affords freedom as to the circumstantialia of time, manner, and the employment of means.

The provision made by Mr. Wesley to meet the wants of Scotland may be aduced. It was found that the usual mode of doing good in England did not suit the state of things in that country; and in consequence of this absence of adaptation, the work of God did not prosper as in other places. Did the founder of our Societies determine, doggedly and pertinaciously, to adhere to one mode of operation? Instead of this, he deviated entirely from his accustomed practice, ordained ministers for that portion of the gospel field, and sanctioned Church principles which, to say the least, were very different from those he adopted in this part of the nation. In the American case we have another illustration of the point on which we are dwelling. When the United States had effected their emancipation from the mother country, Mr. Wesley considered himself at liberty to act with perfect freedom in the new territory, and, we may say, to develop his views and opinions fully; and, if we mistake not, it is to the American Methodist Episcopal Church that we are to look for the real mind and sentiments of this great man. Obstructions removed, he instantly seized the opportunity of appointing an entire

Church system, on the principle of moderate episcopacy. And if we may judge of the wisdom and piety of the design by its usefulness and success, certainly we shall be prepared to consider it most providential \*

Luther and his associated clergy believed that a system of Church government embracing a degree of ministerial imparity was expedient and scriptural, and organized Churches with superintendents or bishops, resting explicitly upon a *jure ecclesiastico* and not upon an assumed and fictitious *jure divino* claim. For the former claim, the precedent and practice of primitive Christianity may be adduced. For the latter, no solitary passage of Scripture can be pleaded. The Papal theory alone is consistent on this point: the visible Church is a mediator between man and God, sacramental union with which alone gives us access to salvation; the ministry is a priesthood, having had sacerdotal grace transmitted to it for administering valid sacraments; the instrument of transmission is the "sacrament of orders," which is intrusted exclusively to the hands of a bishop, who was ordained by some other bishop, who likewise was ordained by some other, until by tactual succession or ascension we come to the very apostles of Christ themselves. This is a theory which one can understand. It is consistent as well as plain. It lacks but one thing—it is not true! To this theory, premises and conclusion, Wesley like Luther gave a distinct, unmistakable denial.† And surely he was in good company when he said: "The uninterrupted succession I know to be a fable, which no man ever did or can prove."

Among other Churchmen of high authority, Bishop Hoadley asserts: "It hath not pleased God, in his providence, to keep up any proof of the least probability, or moral possibility, of a regular, uninterrupted succession; but there is a great appearance, and, humanly speaking, a certainty, that the succession hath often been interrupted." And the learned Archbishop Whately: "There is not a minister in all Christendom who is able to trace up, with approach to certainty, his spiritual pedigree. The

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\* Methodism in its Origin and Economy, by James Dixon, D.D., ex-president of the Wesleyan Conference, 1848.

† The Wesleyan like the Lutheran movement originated its episcopacy, and conserved and perpetuated its spiritual forces, upon the presbyterial basis. Martin Luther, assisted by three other presbyters, ordained the first Lutheran bishop, Nicholas Ambsdorf, January 20, 1542. Thus was originated the Lutheran episcopacy of Germany and Europe.

transmission of orders from the apostles to an English clergyman of the present day must have been through a great number of intermediate persons. Now, it is probable that no clergyman in the Church of England can trace up his spiritual genealogy from bishop to bishop, even so far back as the time of the Reformation. There remain fifteen or sixteen hundred years during which the history of the transmission of his orders is buried in utter darkness.

That such a theory of the ministry finds any acceptance is because certain principles of human nature favor it. It pleases the "clergy," for it invests them with a mysterious power, an awful sanctity; and this gives them importance apart from moral character and mental ability. The same principle long kept the heathen oracles in credit. It is a pleasing fancy for the people—this getting something, tangibly, by a direct line from the apostles! The idea of an unbroken chain of ordained persons is readily taken in, and that some special virtue must attach to their ministrations is admitted with unthinking facility. Baptism at their hands works inward regeneration; by their manipulations "the real presence" is communicated to bread and wine; absolution pronounced by them goes farther and means more than if the magic words were pronounced by others. Here is a refuge for formality and carnal security.

Fortunately American Methodism has no such evil inheritance as this fancied "succession" carries in its very nature; for it seems to be inevitably corrupting to Protestantism. It is a leaven that works, wherever lodged, and prevails sooner or later. Like the interdicted omer of manna which "bred worms and stank"—like the brazen serpent that Israel burned incense to, and the reforming king broke in pieces and put away as *nehushtan*—so is the claim of the "succession," upon whatever historical pretense. The Low-church or Evangelical party in the English Establishment was a power for good, when half a century ago a knot of learned and earnest Churchmen began to push so-called succession to its ultimate consequences. The essential principle of Romanism is in it. Perversions to popery became frequent and popish tendencies grew under the name of Puseyism, until we have seen the Evangelical party wane, and the dominating influence and the great preferments pass into the hands of its opponents. The moderate or evangelical party in the Protestant Episcopal Church

of America was declared in his time by Bishop White to include the large majority of his co-religionists; but it has nearly disappeared, and an attempt was lately made by its representatives to organize a Reformed Episcopal Church, free from the sacerdotal tendencies and doctrinal corruptions of the parent body.

The Methodist Episcopacy, making no claim to this spurious line, rescues the name of bishop from perversion, and redeems this ancient and efficient and unifying form of government from suspicion. It gives to a pure system of doctrine the benefit of an apostolical system of propagandism and government, while maintaining the unity of the Spirit in fraternizing with all evangelical denominations. Methodist episcopacy was first in America, by several years in the persons of its bishops as well as in the organization of its communicants, and it remains the best type. It has central government, without the subtle temptation or prescription to lord it over God's heritage. It has enough of ritual to insure decency and order in public worship, and to meet the demands of a true *cultus*—without the baldness and barrenness and individual irregularity that offends the æsthetic taste. It has a conservative force to maintain sound doctrine with an aggressive spirit that promulgates it. It is not so nicely balanced as to stand still; for where large responsibility is involved it confers large power, but holds it to account. Supervision is everywhere, and this supervision is itself periodically supervised.

John Wesley, knowing his brother's opinions, did not take him into his counsels when arranging for the American Church. Upon Coke's return to England, with his ordination-sermon and journal, and "Minutes of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America," the Christmas Conference matters were much discussed. Charles was deeply wounded, and attacked Coke and the proceedings. There seems to have been no doubt, no misunderstanding on that side of the water as to what had been intended and done on this. Charles Wesley exclaims against his brother's act: "Dr. Coke's Methodist Episcopal Church in Baltimore was intended to beget a Methodist Episcopal Church here. You know he comes, armed with your authority, to make us all Dissenters. One of your sons assured me that not a preacher in London would refuse orders from the Doctor." One Dr. Seabury, of Connecticut, after waiting two years upon the English bishops for ordination to the episcopacy, and failing,

went to the non-juring bishops of Scotland and got the "succession" from them. In time it came to be regarded as an inferior article. He was very kind, offering to ordain such Methodist preachers as were "qualified;" and Charles Wesley complains that his brother and Dr. Coke did not wait for Dr. Seabury and get orders on that line.

Coke, condemned in the public prints for his proceedings, publicly replies that he had done "nothing without the direction of Mr. Wesley." The charge of ambition had been more than intimated, and Wesley replies to his brother: "I believe Dr. Coke is as free from ambition as from covetousness. He has done nothing rashly that I know. If you will not or cannot help me yourself, do not hinder those that can and will. I must and will save as many souls as I can while I live, without being careful about what may *possibly be* when I die." Poets often prophesy; and Charles uttered grievous vaticinations of the fate of the American Methodists: "They will lose their influence and importance; they will turn to vain janglings; they will settle again upon their lees, and, like other sects of Dissenters, come to nothing!"

His biographer, an ex-president of British Methodism, says:

Their Church has indeed violated the theory of a succession of bishops, as a distinct order, from the apostles. It has an episcopacy which was originated by a presbyter; but it has not been a whit the less salutary on this account. As an instrument of extensive spiritual good to the souls of men, it appears to immense advantage when compared with the American episcopacy with which Bishop Seabury stood connected. In the Methodist Church the great design of the sacraments, of preaching, and of ecclesiastical discipline, has been answered. The members are undeniably justified through faith in the blood of Jesus, and are sanctified by the power of the Holy Ghost. Husbands and wives, parents and children, the aged and the young, the rich and the poor, the master and the servant, have exhibited, and still exhibit, both in life and death, the piety, the zeal, the charity, the justice, the holiness, peace, and joy of apostolical Christianity, which Charles Wesley has described in his incomparable hymns. Could he have witnessed the triumphant extension of the work of God in connection with the ordinations, he would have smiled at his honest mistake, and have wiped away his needless tears.

And yet the appointment of a bishop by presbyters is no novelty, as the early history of the Church of Alexandria demonstrates, as well as that of the Lutheran Church in Germany. In the appointment of Dr. Coke, Mr. Wesley did no more than the great German reformer had done to meet the wants of the people whom God had given him. Every reader of ecclesiastical history knows that Martin Luther, again and again, with the aid and concurrence of his fellow-presbyters, ordained bishops for the Protestant Church of Germany.\*

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\* Life of C. Wesley, by Thomas Jackson.



The life and ministry of Charles Wesley closed out becomingly. Time brings old age; the active workers slacken their pace, and then cease. One of the most affecting incidents connected with advancing life is the loss of early friends, who successively retire to "the house appointed for all living." This is a warning and a preparation to survivors. The death of Perronet was soon followed by that of Fletcher—the first peaceful, the last triumphant. On his death-bed, having the most elevated and impressive views of the atonement, Fletcher often exclaimed:

"Jesus' blood, through earth and skies,  
Mercy, free, boundless mercy, cries!"

and added, in the full exercise of an appropriating faith:

"Mercy's full power I soon shall prove,  
Loved with an everlasting love!"

In this manner the eloquent and successful advocate of the Wesleyan theology closed his eyes upon earth and passed to the enjoyment of his endless reward.

In old age Charles Wesley's employment and pleasures were reduced to three things—preaching the gospel, making hymns, and comforting those that mourn. In the pulpit the flow of spirits and of words and of thoughts was often sluggish; but morning and evening of Lord's-day, he desired to be there. "In such cases," says his biographer—waiting for utterance and aid, "he usually preached with his eyes closed; fumbled with his hands about his breast; leaned with elbows upon the Bible; and his whole body was in motion. He was often so feeble as to be under necessity of once or twice calling upon the congregation to sing, that he might recover himself and be able to finish his discourse." In prayer he was copious and mighty, especially upon sacramental occasions, when he seemed to "enter into the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus." Enfeebled by years and disease, he continued his public religious services, in this spirit and manner, till within a few months of his death. For condemned felons his compassionate concern continued undiminished to the last. He visited them in their cells; wept with them because of their guilt and misery; taught them the way to the mercy-seat of God, through the death of his Son; prayed with them. The last publication he sent from the press was a tract of twelve pages, entitled, "*Prayers for Condemned Malefactors*," consisting of hymns adapted to their use.

At this period Charles Wesley's appearance and habits were peculiar. He rode every day (clothed for winter even in summer) a little horse gray with age. When he mounted, if a subject struck him, he proceeded to expand and put it in order. He would write a hymn thus given him, on a card (kept for that purpose), with his pencil in short-hand. Not unfrequently he has come to the house in the City Road, and, having left the pony in the garden in front, he would enter, crying out, "Pen and ink! pen and ink!" These being supplied, he wrote the hymn he had been composing. When this was done, he would look round on those present, and salute them with much kindness; ask after their health; give out a short hymn, and thus put all in mind of eternity. He was fond of that stanza upon those occasions:

There all the ship's company meet.

When confined to his bed, he wished to hear nothing read but the Holy Scriptures. "I visited him several times in his last sickness," said Dr. Whitehead, his physician, "and his body was indeed reduced to the most extreme state of weakness. He possessed that state of mind which he had been always pleased to see in others—unaffected humility, and holy resignation to the will of God. He had no transports of joy, but solid hope and unshaken confidence in Christ, which kept his mind in perfect peace." All his prayer was for "patience and an easy death." Some person remarked that the valley of the shadow of death was hard to be passed. "Not with Christ," he replied. While in extreme feebleness, having been silent and quiet for some time, he called Mrs. Wesley to him, and requested her to write the following lines at his dictation:

In age and feebleness extreme,  
Who shall a sinful worm redeem?  
JESUS, my only hope thou art,  
Strength of my failing flesh and heart;  
O could I catch a smile from thee,  
And drop into eternity!

With this swan-like note, the sweet singer glided into the upper choir. For fifty years Christ had been the subject of his sermons and of his songs; and he may be said to have died with a hymn to Christ upon his lips, March 29, 1788, at the advanced age of eighty years.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

The Council: Its Failure—O'Kelley's Schism—Hamlett's—Charge of Heresy—General Conference of 1792: Some of its Work—Republican Methodists—Presiding Elders: Their Office and its Duties Defined—John Wesley's Death

THE want of a bond of union among the various Conferences, that met separately in annual session, was attempted to be supplied by a Council. The plan of it was approved by a majority of the preachers in 1789, and the Council held its first meeting that year. The preamble of the enacting clause runs thus:

Whereas the holding of General Conferences on this extensive continent would be attended with a variety of difficulties, and many inconveniences to the work of God; and whereas we judge it expedient that a Council should be formed of chosen men out of the several districts as representatives of the whole Connection, to meet at stated times.

The composition of the proposed body was then stated:

Our bishops and presiding elders shall be the members of this Council; provided that the members who form the Council be never fewer than nine. And if any unavoidable circumstance prevent the attendance of a presiding elder at the Council, he shall have authority to send another elder out of his own district to represent him; but the elder so sent by the absenting presiding elder shall have no seat in the Council without the approbation of the bishop or bishops, and presiding elders present. And if, after the above-mentioned provisions are complied with, any unavoidable circumstance, or any contingencies reduce the number to less than nine, the bishop shall immediately summon such elders as do not preside, to complete the number.

The powers of the Council, apparently great, were really very small. "These shall have authority to mature every thing they shall judge expedient: (1) to preserve the general union; (2) to render and preserve the external form of worship similar in all our Societies through the continent; (3) to preserve the essentials of the Methodist doctrines and discipline pure and uncorrupted; (4) to correct all abuses and disorders; and, lastly, they are authorized to mature every thing they may see necessary for the good of the Church, and for promoting and improving our colleges and plan of education." A delegated General Conference seems not yet to have been thought of. The *maturing* Council could only make "recommendatory propositions," but its own make-up, as part of a *legislative* system, was open to objection.

There was a provision which not only required unanimity in the Council, but which, moreover, declared that "nothing so assented to by the Council shall be binding in any district until it has been agreed upon by a majority of the Conference held for that district." This neutralized any possible utility of the whole arrangement, and instead of securing uniformity, made non-conformity probable and more pronounced. "For," said Jesse Lee, who opposed the new plan, "if one district should agree to any important point, and another district should reject it, the union between the two districts would be broken, and in process of time our United Societies would be thrown into disorder and confusion."

The first session of the Council was held at Cokesbury, December 1, 1789, consisting of Richard Ivey, from Georgia; R. Ellis, South Carolina; E. Morris, North Carolina; Philip Bruce, Northern District of Virginia; James O'Kelley, Southern District of Virginia; L. Green, Ohio; Nelson Reed, Western Shore, Maryland; J. Everett, Eastern Shore; John Dickins, Pennsylvania; J. O. Cromwell, New Jersey; and Freeborn Garrettson, New York. Bishop Asbury says, "All our business was done in harmony and love." "The concerns of the college," "the printing business," and "funds for our suffering preachers on the western frontiers," were subjects discussed and acted on at this meeting. The Council was pleased with its work and closed a session of several days with this conclusion: "Considering the weight of the Connection, the concerns of the college, and the printing business, it is resolved that another Council shall be convened at Baltimore on the 1st day of December, 1790."

As a legislative expedient the Council was a failure, gaining neither time nor unanimity in the adoption of necessary measures. The subsequent construction, that its acts were binding on every one when concurred in by a majority of all the members of the several Conferences, was a strained construction. It looks like an after-thought. But to quiet the discontent it had excited and to meet the want which this ill-contrived and unfortunate expedient had clearly failed to meet, a General Conference was called for November, 1792.

Two effects, attributed to the Council, long survived it. One was the interpolation of the General Rules with the slavery clause. No Conference put it there, and no editor or printer ever confessed doing it. It happened in the time of the Council,

the limit of whose powers was not well defined, in its own estimation. The other effect was the O'Kelley schism. James O'Kelley was one of the thirteen preachers selected by the Christmas Conference for the office of elder; and from this period until his withdrawal from the Church, he continued without interruption to fill a prominent position on the "Southern District of Virginia," which embraced nearly all the southern counties of the State with a portion of North Carolina. He exercised great influence over the preachers and people in that part of the work, and as a leader was regarded as hardly second to Asbury. A member of the Council, he was present at the first session, and sanctioned its suggestions. But he had scarcely returned home before he began a course of systematic opposition.

Whether this desertion of his colleagues, and, at first, covert war on the Council, resulted from a conviction of the impropriety of its acts, or from jealousy of Bishop Asbury's growing influence, must here be left undetermined. If his objections were founded on the acts of the Council, he should have opposed them in its session, where one dissent would have defeated them. If his mind had changed as to the expediency of the Council itself, he should have opposed it on its own merits. The industrious and insidious manner in which he assailed Asbury, and endeavored to undermine the Bishop's influence with all who were under his own, makes an unfavorable impression. He did not attend the second session of the Council, but called a convention of the preachers of his district a month before it met; and the subjects proposed for this irregular consultation and the spirit evoked were such as to alarm Coke, when informed of them, for the stability of the Church. The Council was his hobby, by which he endeavored to convict Asbury of designs the most ambitious and unscrupulous. However, to the surprise of those who had been training under him to attack it, the Bishop, so soon as the general dissatisfaction became evident, made no stand for it. The second session, for the sake of peace, sent out no "recommendatory propositions," and a third session was never held.\*

The General Conference assembled in Baltimore, November 1st, 1792. No such assemblage had been held for eight years. There is no "official" record of its proceedings, but Lee, who was present, represents the gathering of preachers as numerous,

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\*Life and Times of McKendree, by Paine; Vol. I., page 128.

“from all parts of the United States where we had any circuits formed.” They came with “the expectation that something of great importance would take place.”

The first business of the Conference was a revision of the Discipline. On the second day O'Kelley brought forward an amendment to one of the fundamental regulations of the Church. The amendment was in the following words: “After the bishop appoints the preachers at Conference to their several circuits, if any one think himself injured by the appointment, he shall have liberty to appeal to the Conference and state his objections, and if the Conference approve his objections, the bishop shall appoint him to another circuit.” This proposition indirectly involved the administration of Asbury, and he retired from the body, leaving Bishop Coke to preside. O'Kelley's motion brought on a long debate: the arguments for and against the proposal were weighty, and handled in a masterly manner. “There never had been a subject before us,” says a member, “that so fully called forth all the strength of the preachers. A large majority of them appeared at first to be in favor of the motion.”

After much debate, John Dickins moved to divide the question thus: 1. Shall the bishop appoint the preachers to the circuits? 2. Shall a preacher be allowed an appeal? Upon deliberation this form of question was allowed. The first question being put, it was carried without a dissenting voice. But when they came to the second, “Shall a preacher be allowed an appeal?” all the ground was gone over again, and the renewed contest waxed warmer and stronger. Sunday intervened; it was a high day. “On Monday,” says Lee, “we began the debate afresh, and continued it through the day; and at night we went to Mr. Otterbein's church, and again continued it till near bed-time, when the vote was taken, and the motion was lost by a large majority.”

Thomas Ware, a member of the Conference, says: “Had O'Kelley's proposition been differently managed it might possibly have been carried. For myself, at first I did not see any thing very objectionable in it; but when it came to be debated, I very much disliked the spirit of those who advocated it, and wondered at the severity in which the movers, and others who spoke in favor of it, indulged in the course of their remarks. The advocates of the opposite side were more dispassionate and argumentative. They urged that Wesley, the father of the Methodist

family, had devised the plan, and deemed it essential for the preservation of the itinerancy. The appeal, it was argued, was rendered impracticable on account of the many difficulties with which it was encumbered. Should one preacher appeal, and the Conference say his appointment should be altered, the bishop must remove some other one to make him room, in which case the other might complain and appeal in his turn; and then again the first might appeal from the new appointment, or others whose appointments these successive alterations might interrupt. Hearing all that was said on both sides, I was finally convinced that the motion for such an appeal ought not to carry."

The people had an interest in the issue, and Asbury, by way of caution, had put in a word for them: "Are you sure that if you please yourselves the people will be as fully satisfied? They often say, 'Let us have such a preacher;' and sometimes, 'We will not have such a preacher; we will sooner pay him to stop at home.' Perhaps I must say, 'His appeal forced him upon you.'"

The next morning a letter was received from O'Kelley and a few of his adherents, informing the Conference that as their resolution had been rejected they could no longer retain their seats in that body. Efforts were at once made to conciliate them; a committee was appointed to wait on O'Kelley and those who were joined with him, and if possible to persuade them to resume their seats; but the effort utterly failed.

A few days after, he and his partisans set out on their return to Virginia, "taking their saddle-bags, great-coats, and other bundles, on their shoulders or arms, and walking on foot to the place where they had left their horses, which was about twelve miles from town." "I stood and looked after them," says Lee, "as they went off, and observed to one of the preachers that I was sorry to see the old man go off in that way, for I was persuaded he would not be quiet long, but he would try to be the head of some party."

This debate consumed a week; it was time well spent; and then the Conference addressed itself to other work which did much to shape the polity of the Church.

The name of presiding elder appears for the first time in the Discipline, and the office is defined. It had grown up out of the elders, sparingly elected in 1784, whose duty was to give the sacraments to the churches and to supervise, in a general

way, the circuits among which they moved. With Wesley's approval the number was afterward increased. A doubt had arisen as to the extent of their powers within their districts, and whether a bishop could appoint or remove them. Their designation to their respective sections had been without respect to time. O'Kelley had traveled the same district in Southern Virginia ever since his ordination, and had preached there several years before. It is supposed that disadvantages resulting from his case led to the present limitations of the office. The new law provided that the bishop should appoint the presiding elders, not allowing them a longer term than four years on any one district. It was likewise determined that the districts should be formed according to the judgment of the bishop, yet so as not to include more than twelve nor less than three circuits in a district. Moreover, it was also said, "The bishop shall appoint the time of holding the District Conferences."

An Annual Conference, including several districts as now, had not then been developed. It was not until four years later that the territory of the Church was mapped out into Conferences in the present way, with names and definite boundaries. The presiding elder was a sort of diocesan bishop, holding his four Quarterly Conferences for each circuit, and then, if the general superintendent be absent, presiding at the "Yearly Conference." It was a great step forward, in the efficient and thorough organization of Methodism as an Episcopal Church, when this officer's place and powers were defined. "Methodism," said one of its earliest and best expounders, "is union all over; we must draw resources from the center to the circumference." As the general superintendent unifies the Connection, taking the oversight of all the churches, and transferring preachers from one point to another as they are needed, without regard to Conference lines, so the presiding elder unifies the district, with its various circuits, stations, and missions. It is his duty: "To travel through his appointed district; in the absence of the bishop, to take charge of all the elders, deacons, traveling and local preachers, and exhorters in his district; to change, receive, and suspend preachers in his district, during the intervals of the Conference, in the absence of the bishop, as the Discipline directs; to oversee the spiritual and temporal business of the Societies in his district; to take care that every part of our Discipline be enforced in his



district; to attend the bishops, when present in his district, and to give them, when absent, all necessary information, by letter, of the state of his district." Such officers are the supplement of the general itinerant superintendency; without them it would be impracticable on a continental scale. They complete the local supervision and make the general one possible. Being selected for experience and ability, they make a large amount of ministerial talent in young or untrained men available, who otherwise could not safely be intrusted with the pastoral care. By their help, advice, and direction, the feeble parts are strengthened and temporary vacancies supplied. They restrain the erring, encourage the despondent, plan for improvement and progress, maintain uniformity and continuity, and being appointees of the bishop, work with him to Connectional unity.

To the salaries of the traveling preachers (sixty-four dollars a year) an addition was made of their traveling expenses. "Their traveling expenses were to include ferriage, horse-shoeing, and provisions for themselves and horses on the road, when they necessarily rode a distance." A new rule was made allowing a preacher to receive money, if offered (but not to charge), for performing the marriage ceremony; but an old one was continued in force forbidding him to accept a gift for baptism or burial. In all this we see the reputation for mercenary character which the preceding clergy had established. Methodist preachers were so determined to steer clear of that rock they ran upon the opposite one. Dearly did they pay for it through many years. But the object of this and similar regulations, as stated by the historian, was worthy of the purest times: "To keep all the preachers as nearly on an equal footing as possible in their money matters, that there might be no jealousies or envying among us; but that we, like brethren of the same family, might all labor together in the gospel of Jesus Christ."

Provision was made for the trial of preachers for immorality, or improper conduct, and for heresy. Also for arbitration between private members, in cases of debt or disputes about money—thus promoting peace, and keeping them out of unseemly and strife-provoking lawsuits.

Directions were given for the conduct of public worship, securing a due proportion of reading the Scriptures, singing, and prayer in the congregation, as well as preaching. Special atten-

tion was given to singing, because in that part of divine service a disposition was manifested, from the beginning, to take from the body of the people what belonged to them, by the introduction of strange and impracticable tunes. "We do not think," say the law-makers, "that fugue tunes are sinful, or improper to be used in private companies, but we do not approve of their being used in our public congregations, because public singing is a part of divine worship, in which all the congregation ought to join." "Before these rules were formed," remarks the historian of that Conference, "a practice in the public congregations had prevented many of the old saints from singing at all, and singing in public worship was likely to be wholly confined to a few. It was always a custom among the Methodists for all the people in the congregation to sing. Singing being a part of divine worship, we encouraged all to worship God."

The right and order of appeal from the sentence of a lower to a higher Church-court were secured and regulated.

In their preface to "The Doctrine and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America," the Bishops say: "We have made some little alterations in the present edition, yet such as affect not in any degree the essentials of our doctrines and discipline." And they add this general remark, which is an answer to all who captiously object to a *new* edition of the Discipline every four years: "We think ourselves obliged frequently to view, and review, the whole order of our Church, always aiming at perfection; standing on the shoulders of those who have lived before us, and taking advantage of our former selves."

This, which may be called the second General Conference, did not adjourn without providing for the assembling of a similar body. One of its principal members describes it:

Notwithstanding we had some close debates, and some distressing hours during that Conference, and with all, some of our preachers were so offended as to leave before the business was half finished, yet it was a comfortable time to most of us, and we were highly favored of the Lord with his presence and love in the last of our sitting. The proceedings of this General Conference gave great satisfaction to our preachers and people; and the divisive spirit which had been prevailing in different parts of our Connection, was considerably checked. And nothing that was done gave more satisfaction than the plan that was laid for having another General Conference at the expiration of four years from that time, to which all the preachers in full connection were at liberty to come. Some of the preachers who came to the Conference dissatisfied, at the close of the meeting were perfectly reconciled, and returned to their circuits fully determined to spend and be spent in the work of the ministry, and in the fellowship of the Church.

Bishop Coke went away with a higher estimate of the ability of American itinerants. "We continued our Conference," he says, "for fifteen days. I had always entertained very high ideas of the piety and zeal of the American preachers, and of the considerable abilities of many; but I had no expectation, I confess, that the debates would be carried on in so very masterly a manner; so that on every question of importance the subject seemed to be considered in every possible light."

As was prophesied, O'Kelley did not remain quiet long: he was soon destroying what he had helped to build up. Alluding to his failure to get the old plan changed at the late Conference, Asbury writes: "For himself the Conference well knew he could not complain of the regulation. He had been located in the south district of Virginia for about ten successive years; and upon his plan might have located himself, and any preacher or set of preachers, within the district, whether the people wished to have them or not."

O'Kelley unfolded his scheme, on the way from Baltimore, to a young itinerant who was temporarily under his malign influence, but escaped out of the snare in time to be a burning and a shining light and a trusted leader.—It was, to have "a republican, no-slavery, glorious Church! Bishop Asbury was a pope; the General Conference was a revolutionizing body; the Bishop and his creatures were working the ruin of the Church to gratify their pride and ambition!"

He labored diligently to sow broadcast the seeds of strife and disunion. By private letters and public harangues he strove to excite the public against Asbury and the Church government. Writing to a friend of former days, he said: "No doubt you have heard I had resigned my place in Conference. I protest against a consolidated government, or any one lord, or archbishop, claiming apostolic authority, declaring to have the keys. Thus our ministry have raised a throne for bishops, which being a human invention, a deviation from Christ and dear Mr. Wesley, I cordially refuse to touch." In one of the pamphlets which soon began to be issued, Asbury was called the "Baltimore Bull," and a rude picture of a bull's head graced the title-page.

O'Kelley adroitly availed himself of the political agitations of the day and organized his associates under the popular name and title of "Republican Methodists."

“It was enough,” says Jesse Lee, “to make the saints of God weep between the porch and the altar, and that both day and night, to see how the Lord’s flock was carried away captive by that division.” He thus describes it:

All were to be on an equal footing. One preacher was not to be above another, nor higher in office or in power than another. No superiority or subordination was to be known among them. They promised to the lay members of the Church greater liberties than they had formerly enjoyed among us, and prevailed with a good many of our people to leave us and join them. In some places they took from us whole Societies together, and in many places they drew off a part. Others they threw into confusion; and in some places they scattered the flock and separated the people one from the other, without securing them to their own party. Brother was turned against brother, and one Christian friend against another. The main contention was about the government of the Church; who should govern it, or in what manner it ought to be governed. In this mist of darkness and confusion, many religious people, who had been warm advocates for the life and power of religion, began to contend about Church government, and neglect the duties of religion, till they were turned back to the world, and gave up religion altogether.

The spirit of division prevailed chiefly in the southern part of Virginia, and in the border counties of North Carolina, in all which region the personal influence of O’Kelley has been seen. It also extended beyond these limits. We find the first two missionaries in Kentucky—Ogden and Haw—drawn away into his scheme. And in other places, he had adherents.

In 1801, O’Kelley issued a pamphlet in which he announced himself and his adherents as “The Christian Church,” renouncing all rules of Church government but the New Testament, as interpreted by every man for himself. Some of his Societies readily assumed the high-sounding name, others hesitated and divisions followed. One party clung to O’Kelley as “The Christian Church;” another followed John Robertson as “Republican Methodists;” and yet another, under the lead of Guirey and others, set up for themselves under the title of “Independent Christian Baptist Church.”\* Lee, writing in 1809, says: “They have been divided and subdivided till at present it is hard to find two of them that are of one opinion. There are now but few of them in that part of Virginia where they were the most numerous.”

The hurt done may in part be estimated by figures. At the close of 1791, the Methodist membership numbered 63,269 whites, and 12,884 colored—total 76,153. It was not until 1801 that these figures were again reached. At the end of the first four years of

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\* Bennett’s Memorials of Methodism in Virginia.

Episcopal Methodism, as already stated, its membership was doubled; and in the next three, it was more than doubled. Moving forward at this rate, it was arrested by a decade of strife. The lowest point is shown in the returns of 1796, when 45,384 white members, and 11,260 colored were reported. The Church then recovered its tone; the falling away ceased; and the next year showed a gain of 1,060 white, 958 colored members; and there was a steady annual increase afterward.

Bishop Asbury met the Virginia Conference at Manchester, November 26—twelve days after the General Conference adjourned. The plague was begun; he threw himself promptly into the leader's stronghold, and did what he could to arrest the evil. Among the painful incidents of the session was a letter from a young preacher—Wm. McKendree—respectfully declining to take an appointment for the ensuing year. He was a lately ordained elder, and from the beginning of his ministry had been in O'Kelley's district. The arch-agitator had nursed him diligently for years, and had shaken his confidence in Asbury and the Church government. He had the young man for his traveling companion to Baltimore, roomed with him, and brought him away on the failure of his motion. McKendree did not withdraw; he wanted time to consider. His biographer tells the rest:

Shortly after the close of the Conference, Bishop Asbury passed through the neighborhood of Mr. McKendree's father. The mind of young McKendree was ill at ease about his duty, and having had an interview with the Bishop, he was treated with great kindness, and invited to travel with him awhile. The invitation was accepted, and as they went from one appointment to another, through the eastern portion of Virginia, they calmly and fully discussed the subjects of Church government—especially Methodist government—the late attempt to change the system, the course and design of Mr. O'Kelley, and the consequences likely to result to himself and others. Bishop Asbury did not correspond to the description which Mr. McKendree had heard of him. Instead of being austere, proud, ambitious, and bent upon subjecting the liberties of the membership and the ministry to his will, he was surprised to find him humble, devout, self-denying, and unceasing in his efforts for the welfare of the Church. He soon understood, too, the evil consequences which would inevitably follow the adoption of O'Kelley's late favorite measure—the ruin of the general superintendency, and of the whole itinerant system. The spell of the enchanter was broken; humbled and mortified at his own weakness, with characteristic candor, he confessed his error, was received again into the confidence of the noble and warm-hearted old Bishop, and at once sent to the city of Norfolk.\*

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\* Paine's Life and Times of McKendree.

It was only a month's suspension of an itinerant ministry which ended, as we shall see, only with his useful and holy life. This shaking up, this honest doubt, led him to study the whole subject closely, and McKendree became the constitutional expounder of Methodism. He mastered the philosophy as well as the details of its government, and was prepared, at a future crisis, to stand in the breach and save it against a host of strong men.

While Asbury spared no pains to expose O'Kelley's errors and thwart his plans and counteract his mischievous influence, he kept his heart right toward him. At Winchester, hearing that his former friend was lying ill, the Bishop sent two brethren to say that he would wait on him if he desired it. They "met in peace asked of each other's welfare, talked of persons and things indifferently, prayed, and parted in peace. Not a word was said of the troubles of former times." This was their first interview after the rupture, and the last. O'Kelley lived to be ninety-two years of age, dying in 1826. "He saw the man whom he had sought to ruin descend to his grave in peace and full of honors, mourned by grateful thousands as the Father of American Methodism. He saw his place filled and his principles defended by another, whom he had fondly marked for a leader in his own ranks. He saw hundreds of his own followers forsaking him, and rallying again to the standard of Episcopal Methodism. He saw those who remained scattered and broken into contending factions. All this he lived to witness, and in the face of all, the stern old man clung to his cause with a heroism worthy of a better one, and with faltering voice and failing strength proclaimed his confidence in its ultimate success."

Impartial history requires us to say we find no evidence of the heresy alleged against James O'Kelley—that he was unsound on the Trinity, and hastened his secession for fear of being brought to trial. An error so radical must have worked out, in him and his followers, striking manifestations; but none such appear. The few preachers and people who continue to represent him represent also, so far as known, a sound doctrine and experience. The trouble was governmental, not doctrinal; and in the later adjustments of Episcopal Methodism, occasion could hardly be found for its recurrence.

Evil was in the air. The spirit of dissension was rife. About this time the Church in Charleston was humbled and brought

very low by a schism that extended to Georgetown and Wilmington, and ate like a canker into the country congregations from those centers. Another young minister, who subsequently entered into the best Methodist history, also barely escaped this snare. The father of William Capers had been an officer with Marion and Sumter in the Revolution; was a man of wealth and social position, and one of Asbury's best friends. There was a camp-meeting near Rembert Hall, in November, 1808. Bishop Asbury was there. The late Bishop Capers, then just entering the ministry, in his autobiography gives the leading facts:

In the former days my father's house was one of his favorite homes. My father was of the first race of Methodists in South Carolina, and a decided and influential one; he had declined from his spirituality some time after his removal to Georgetown District; and not till the present year had he recovered it. On Dr. Coke's visit to America in 1791, he was accompanied from the West Indies to Charleston by William Hammett, and this Mr. Hammett choosing to remain in Charleston, found some occasion to object to Mr. Asbury and the American preachers, as in they had done him a wrong on account of his devotion to Mr. Wesley; Mr. Asbury being (as he represented) ambitious of supplanting Mr. Wesley with the American people. Mr. Hammett had the confidence of Mr. Wesley (by what means does not appear) to the last of his life; and on that foundation he raised his Society of Primitive Methodists. And when we consider that there were then no Methodist books published in America, and the people knew little of the action of the Conferences, but what they got verbally from the preachers, and that Mr. Hammett had been introduced by Dr. Coke as one of the most godly as well as the most gifted of the preachers, the wonder is not that he should have drawn off to himself, under a banner inscribed "Wesley against Asbury," some of the most influential of the people, but we might wonder rather that he did not seduce them all; and the more, as he was unquestionably an eloquent and able man, of fine person and engaging manners, and at first vastly popular. But his work did not prosper. He had estranged his adherents, of whom my father was one, from the rest of the Methodists, whom they called "the Asbury Methodists," for no good result either to himself or them. I was introduced to Bishop Asbury immediately on his coming to the camp-meeting, as I happened to be in the preachers' tent at the time of his arrival. I approached him timidly, you may be sure, and with a feeling of profound veneration; but "Ah," said he, "this is the baby; come and let me hug you;" meaning that I was the baby when he was last at my father's house. On my father's entering the tent, he rose hastily from his seat and met him with his arms extended, and they embraced each other with mutual emotion. It had been seventeen years since they had seen each other; and yet the Bishop asked after Sally and Gabriel, as if it had been but a few months, and repeated gleefully, "I have got the baby!" It was evident that no common friendship had subsisted between them; and how much happier had those years of estrangement been to my honored father if they had been passed in the fellowship which he had been seduced to leave! I hate schism, I abhor it as the very track and trail of him who "as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour."

Hammett's schism was not so extensive as his brother Irishman's; he lacked his fierce energy and his large acquaintance. In Charleston enough members were drawn away from the "Blue Meeting-house," and enough outsiders enlisted to build a fine chapel and parsonage. After fifteen or twenty years, by purchase or by treaty, this Trinity Church and other Hammett church property in other places, with most of the membership, reverted to the old side or Asbury Methodists. The oak is rooted by storms as well as by sunshine. In the long run it may be well that Episcopal Methodism endured such ordeals at the beginning; but the souls of men are in the crucible, and humanity grudges a wasteful consumption.

The two bishops were passing through Virginia, when Asbury made this entry in his journal for April 29, 1791:

The solemn news reached our ears that the public papers had announced the death of that dear man of God, John Wesley. He died in his own house in London, in the eighty-eighth year of his age, after preaching the gospel for sixty-four years. Brother Coke was sunk in spirit, and wished to hasten home immediately. For myself, notwithstanding my long absence from Mr. Wesley, and a few unpleasant expressions in some of his letters the dear old man has written to me (occasioned by the misrepresentation of others), I feel the stroke most sensibly. Dr. Coke set out for Baltimore in order to get the most speedy passage to England; leaving me to fill the appointments.

At Alexandria the solemn news was confirmed—John Wesley had died March 2d. "Our people die well," was his thoughtful summary of the death-bed experiences of the first Methodists, half a century before; and his own death was no exception. The prayer that was often on his lips was answered:

"O that without a lingering groan  
I may the welcome word receive,  
My body with my charge lay down,  
And cease at once to work and live."

His journal shows this last birthday record: "June 28, 1790.—This day, I enter into my eighty-eighth year. For above eighty-six years, I found none of the infirmities of old age; my eyes did not wax dim, neither was my natural strength abated; but, last August, I found almost a sudden change. My eyes were so dim that no glasses would help me. My strength likewise now quite forsook me; and probably will not return in this world. But I feel no pain from head to foot; only it seems nature is exhausted; and



humanly speaking, will sink more and more, till 'the weary springs of life stand still at last.'"

A month before that, he was making his tour in the North. One of his preachers writes: "In the latter end of May, Mr. Wesley visited us. He came from Glasgow that day (about seventy miles), but his strength was almost exhausted, and, when he attempted to preach, very few could hear him. His sight was likewise much decayed, so that he could neither read the hymn or text." And a month before that he preached at Bradshaw, where, on his tottering up the pulpit stairs, the whole congregation burst into a flood of tears. Wesley's old age was fruitful as well as beautiful. Marvelous had been the success of Methodism up to the year 1780; and, yet, the results during the last ten years of his life were more than double the united results of the forty years preceding.

At the age of seventy-five he published the first number of his *Arminian Magazine* (1778)—now the oldest in the world—and was its editor and most valuable contributor to the last year of his life; furnishing six sermons annually, fresh and vigorous. When eighty-five years old we find him breakfasting at three o'clock in the morning with a friend. Addressing his coachman at this early breakfast in the city of York, he said: "Have the carriage at the door at four. I do not mean a quarter or five minutes past, but four." He still preaches once or twice a day, but begins to find three sermons on Sunday not always convenient. Taking stock of himself at this time, he says: "It is true, I am not so agile as I was in times past. I do not run or walk so fast as I did; my sight is a little decayed. I find, likewise, some decay in my memory, with regard to names and things lately past, but not at all with regard to what I have read or heard twenty, forty, or sixty years ago; neither do I find any decay in my hearing, smell, taste, or appetite (though I want but a third part of the food I did once); nor do I feel any such thing as weariness, either in traveling or preaching; and I am not conscious of any decay in writing sermons; which I do as readily, and I believe as correctly, as ever." To two things chiefly, under God's blessing, he thinks this prolonging of his tranquillity may be attributed—"to my having constantly, for above sixty years, risen at four in the morning; and to my constant preaching at five in the morning, for above fifty years."

The last letter he wrote to America bore date February 1, 1791, and was addressed to Ezekiel Cooper who died in 1847, "the oldest Methodist preacher in the world." He says:

Those that desire to write or to say any thing to me have no time to lose, for time has shaken me by the hand, and death is not far behind. I have given a distinct account of the work of God which has been wrought in Britain and Ireland for more than half a century. We want some of you to give us a connected relation of what our Lord has been doing in America since the time that Richard Boardman accepted the invitation and left his country to serve you. See that you never give place to one thought of separating from your brethren in Europe. Lose no opportunity of declaring to all men that the Methodists are one people in all the world, and that it is their full determination so to continue—

Though mountains rise, and oceans roll,  
To sever us in vain.

The death of Charles Wesley deeply and permanently affected him. He was far away on his wide field at the time his brother died and was buried; but it is recorded as a curious incident that (as was afterward ascertained) he and his congregation, at the very moment of his brother's exit, were singing:

"Come let us join our friends above  
That have obtained the prize."

A fortnight afterward he attempted to give out, as his second hymn, the one beginning with the words, "Come, O thou traveler unknown;" but when he came to the lines,

My company before is gone,  
And I am left alone with Thee,

the bereaved old man sunk down under uncontrollable emotion, burst into tears, and hid his face with his hands. The congregation well knew the cause of his speechless excitement; singing ceased; and the chapel became a *Bochim*. At length, Wesley recovered himself, rose again, and went through a service which was never forgotten by those who were present.

February 24, 1791, he rose at 4 A.M.; went to an appointment eighteen miles from London, and preached from "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he is near." This was Wesley's last sermon—the last of more than forty thousand. Such symptoms appeared on the 26th that a physician was called in. Sunday morning, the 27th, he seemed better, sat in his chair looked cheerful, and repeated from one of his brother's hymns:

"Till glad I lay this body down,  
Thy servant, Lord, attend;  
And O my life of mercies crown  
With a triumphant end!"

And soon after, with marked emphasis, he repeated the Master's words—"Our friend Lazarus sleepeth." "I want to write," said he. A pen was put in his hand, and paper was placed before him; but his hand had forgot its cunning. "I cannot," said the dying man. "Let me write for you," remarked his niece; "tell me what you wish to say." "Nothing," he replied, "but that God is with us." "I will get up," was his firmly expressed wish at another time, after repose; and, while his friends were arranging his clothes, Wesley began singing:

"I'll praise my Maker while I've breath;  
And, when my voice is lost in death,  
Praise shall employ my nobler powers:  
My days of praise shall ne'er be past,  
While life, and thought, and being last,  
Or immortality endures."

Once more seated in his chair, in a weak voice, he sung what proved to be his last song on earth:

"To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,  
Who sweetly all agree."

His voice failed; he whispered: "Now we have done. Let us all go." Happy, but exhausted, he was put to bed, where, after a short but quiet sleep, he opened his eyes, and addressing the loving watchers who stood around him, said, "Pray, and praise!" They were at once upon their knees, and fervent were the dying patriarch's responses, especially to the prayer that God would still bless the system of doctrine and discipline which he had been the means of introducing into the world. On rising from their knees, he took hold of all their hands and with the utmost placidness saluted them, and said, "Farewell, farewell." A little after, a person coming in, he strove to speak, but could not. Finding they could not understand him, he paused a little, and then, with all the remaining strength he had, cried out, "The best of all is, God is with us!" and soon after, lifting up his arm in token of victory, and raising his feeble voice with a holy triumph not to be expressed, he again repeated the heart-reviving words, "The best of all is, God is with us."

Wednesday morning the closing scene drew near. A faithful friend prayed with him, and the last word he was heard to articulate was, "Farewell!" A few minutes before ten, without a groan, this beloved pastor of thousands entered into rest.

John Wesley needs no eulogy from his children. Methodists may not speak. Let others declare the truth.

"He was a man," says Lord Macaulay, "whose eloquence and logical acuteness might have rendered him eminent in literature; whose genius for government was not inferior to that of Richelieu; and who devoted all his powers, in defiance of obloquy and derision, to what he sincerely considered the highest good of his species."

"A greater poet may rise than Homer or Milton," writes Dr. Dobbin, of Oxford University, "a greater theologian than Calvin, a greater philosopher than Bacon, a greater dramatist than any of ancient or modern fame; but a more distinguished revivalist of the Churches than John Wesley, never."

The judgment of Southey, in a letter to Wilberforce, is: "I consider Wesley as the most influential mind of the last century—the man who will have produced the greatest effects, centuries, or perhaps millenniums hence, if the present race of men should continue so long."

March 30, 1876, Dean Stanley unveiled a monument, in Westminster Abbey, to John and Charles Wesley. "As you will see presently, when the monument is uncovered," said he, "John Wesley is represented as preaching upon his father's tomb; and I have always thought that that is, as it were, a parable which represented his relation to our own national institutions. He took his stand upon his father's tomb—on the venerable and ancestral traditions of the country and of the Church. That was the stand from which he addressed the world; it was not from the points of disagreement, but from the points of agreement with them in the Christian religion, that he produced those great effects which have never since died out in English Christendom."

A space in the wall on the south aisle of the venerable Abbey, three by nine feet, is filled with a massive white marble tablet. Within a sunken circle are medallion profiles, life-size, of the two brothers. Above, are their names, with date of birth and death. Below—"THE BEST OF ALL IS, GOD IS WITH US." Beneath this quotation is sculptured, in bold bas-relief, John Wesley preaching on his father's tombstone. At the bottom is Charles Wesley's exultant exclamation:

"GOD BURIES HIS WORKMEN, BUT CARRIES ON HIS WORK."

## CHAPTER XXX.

Jesse Lee Enters New England—Inhospitable Reception—The Difficulties—Gairn a Footing—The Need of Methodism There—Asbury Confirming the Work—Soule—Fisk—Hedding—Bangs—Boston Common—Success—Memorial.

A SCULPTOR, mallet and chisel in hand, stands before a fine block of marble. It is cold and hard, but he sees a warm and noble statue in it and falls to work to release it. So might Jesse Lee have contemplated New England. Soule and Hedding, Mudge and Merritt, Sabin, Broadhead, Fisk, Bangs, and Hunt, and others, are there, with a host of members true to their principles, earnest in their convictions; saving much and giving much; taking a great deal of interest in their neighbors' affairs and managing their own thriftily; the last field to be entered by Methodism and the first to report any thing like a well-endowed Methodist College; potentially fruitful of missionaries and Church historians—such a land was worth possessing.

As yet, Methodist preachers had gone round it: they had spread to Canada and Nova Scotia on the north; to Utica on the west, and entered the Valley of Wyoming; but no entrance had been effected into New England. Jesse Lee felt this to be his mission. He had been gradually approaching it; starting at Salisbury, thence to Baltimore, and thence to New Jersey, he was ready to cross the border and only waited the word from the general superintendent. He had heard of Yankee learning, without dismay. His library, itinerant like himself, embraced a Bible, hymn-book, and Discipline. In common with itinerants, it is likely that he wore a straight-breasted coat, and a white cravat without collar; that his face was smooth-shaven, and his hat had an ample brim; and he traveled on horseback. In the forks of the Yadkin he had picked up a little colloquial Dutch; and when to test his scholarship the parsons and school-masters, full of Greek and Latin, addressed him in an unknown tongue, he paid them back in their own coin. Ready and witty when self-defense called for it, he was also loving and pathetic: at once tender and sharp, the very man for such an enterprise. He possessed a courage which nothing could daunt, and a cheerfulness

that never failed. His style of address was full of shrewdness as well as of force, whereby he could rivet the attention of any audience, going straight to the hearts of his hearers, "putting them at once on the defensive if they were inclined to controversy, or carrying them completely with him if they were honest seekers after the truth." In person of magnificent presence, thirty-two years old, and above the ordinary size, he had the manners of a Christian gentleman, and could sing the Methodist hymns in a style that left little use for church-bells to call together his congregation. His crowning endowment for a mission among the descendants of the Puritans was an abiding conviction that he was directed by God to bestow on them some spiritual gifts which they needed. Full of the Holy Ghost and faith he did not expect a holiday recreation; he counted on difficulties and discouragements, but he had faith in the power of the gospel. It was the old battle of lamps and pitchers, of the sword of the Lord and of Gideon.

"Stamford—Jesse Lee," was read out by Bishop Asbury at the close of Conference held in New York, May, 1789. Stamford was the first town in Connecticut over the border line, and really meant all New England, where Methodism had not a single member, and what had been heard of it had made the name synonymous with fanaticism and heresy. To the appointee the whole territory was new; and if he should enter any door, it would be after he had pushed it open. Three capital disabilities had to be met: He was from the South, a quarter from which the people he was sent to did not look for light; he was an Arminian, and hardly any thing worse could be said of his doctrine among the descendants of the Pilgrims, where predestination, election, reprobation, decrees, final perseverance, and kindred dogmas, were secured behind strong and venerable intrenchments; lastly, he was not, in technical phrase, an "educated minister." Among his first adventures, after crossing the line, was this: He alighted at the door of an inn, and told the hostess he was a preacher and wished to preach in the village. "Have you a liberal education, sir?" "Tolerable, madam; enough, I think, to carry me through the country."

Another peculiarity of the situation may be added: The land was divided into parishes and dotted over with meeting-houses, and it was held to be the duty of every citizen to support the

gospel just as much as to support the public roads or the public schools. The clergy were a ruling class in secular as well as in spiritual affairs; their salaries were raised by taxes collectable by law from unwilling parishioners; and for years no one could hold office unless he were a member of a Church of "The Standing Order"—that is to say, Orthodox Congregationalism. To be exempted from this tax one must certify to the parish authorities that he "did duty" in connection with some other religious Society. Thus the formation of other Societies within territory tributary to the "standing order" furnished an opportunity for persons to take themselves and their property out from under the operation of the Church tax law; on which account the setting up of any new religious organization was a serious affair, financially as well as theologically. It has been the fashion in certain quarters to accuse the old-time clergy of New England of "savage orthodoxy," in view of their opposition to the Methodist movement; but a careful study of the situation will show another side to the shield. It was not only the theology of Geneva and Westminster they were defending, but their political, financial, and social preëminence. "Free grace and free-will were bad enough, but free Churches were worse." There was too much freedom already; and if Methodist churches, on the voluntary system, were to become numerous, there would be a falling off in parish revenues.\*

When they questioned him about "principles," and argued on the "five points," Lee was not troubled; but he sorely felt the lack of hospitality. On reaching a house to which he had been invited, no one offered him a seat; helping himself to a chair, he tried to be at home; when the hour for preaching came, not one of the family would go; on his return from meeting, scarcely a word was spoken to him; the man of the house held prayers, and said nothing to his guest; in the morning the whole family slept against time, and Lee was compelled to leave fasting.

His first day's experience was often repeated: "June 17 --I set out with prayer to God for a blessing on my endeavors, and with an expectation of many oppositions." Arrived in Norwalk, he applied for a private house to preach in, but was refused. He then asked for the use of an old deserted building, but was again re-

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\*History of Methodism, by Rev. W. H. Daniels, A.M.

fused. He proposed to preach in a neighboring orchard, but was still repulsed. He took his stand at last under an apple-tree on the public road, surrounded by twenty hearers. "After singing and praying," he says, "I preached on 'Ye must be born again.' I felt happy that we were favored with so comfortable a place. After preaching I told the people that I intended to be with them again in two weeks, and if any of them would open their houses to receive me I should be glad; but if they were not willing, we would meet at the same place."

Sometimes he got the school-house, or a barn, or the court house, or a private dwelling, for a preaching-place, and sometimes it was under the trees. Three months of chilling rebuffs and occasional welcomes passed, he preached at Stratfield, and after the sermon conducted "a kind of class-meeting," composed of about twenty persons. This led to the formation, the next day, of the first class, composed of three women, who, he says, "appeared willing to bear the cross, and have their names cast out as evil, for the Lord's sake." At Hartford he is allowed the State-house: "They were very solemn and attentive; many of them were deeply affected, and wept bitterly under the word. It appeared to me that God was opening the way for us." Returning, in his circuit, to this place, he records:

I was informed that several persons were awakened by my preaching when I was here before. The hearing of this humbled my soul in the dust, and strengthened my faith. Ah, Lord, what am I, that thou shouldst own my labors and comfort my soul? Not unto me, not unto me, O Lord, but unto thy name be the glory! At two o'clock they rang the bell, and we met in the State-house. I preached on 1 Thessalonians v. 19. I had a large number of hearers to speak to; and glory be to God for his goodness to me while preaching his word! I felt my soul happy in the Lord; the people heard with great attention, and with many tears.

In one of the villages of Connecticut there lived at this time an honest and intelligent blacksmith, who, when Lee appeared there, kept his family at home, lest they should become infected with the itinerant's heterodoxy. One of his sons, about twelve years old, heard of the arrival of the stranger. He was not allowed to hear him preach, but never forgot the marvelous rumors of his ministry. He was to become Lee's successor in this very field, and to do important service for his Church. Such, says his biographer, was Nathan Bangs's first knowledge of Methodism.

At Farmington, the itinerant came face to face with "principles," which means dispute. He was entertained by a Mr. W.:



We had been there but a little time before the old man began to talk about principles, and the old lady to prepare dinner. We continued the discourse till we had dined. When the old man found out that we believe a person might fall from grace and be lost, he discovered a good deal of anger, and said, "If David had died in the act of adultery, and Peter while swearing, they would have been saved." "Then," said I, "after a man is converted he is obliged to be saved; he can't help it." "Yes," said he, "he is obliged to be saved, whether he will or not, for it is impossible for him to help it." He said he would as soon hear us curse God at once as to hear us say that God would give his love to a person and then take it away. I told him God would never take it away, but we might cast it away. Seeing he was much ruffled in his temper, I thought it best to be moving; so we asked him the way to Mr. Coles's, but he would not tell us, for he said Mr. Coles would not like his sending such men to his house. However, we got directions from his wife, and then we set out. I shook hands with the old man, and told him I hoped God would reward him for his kindness.

After preaching at Fairfield, on a cold wintry night, December 24, he exclaimed: "To-night, thanks be to God, I was invited by a widow woman to put up at her house. This is the first invitation I have had since I first came to the place, which is between six and seven months. O my Lord, send more laborers into this part of thy vineyard! I love to break up new ground, and hunt the lost souls in New England, though it is hard work; but when Christ is with me, hard things are made easy, and rough ways made smooth."

Monday, the 28th, was the date of the second Society. "I preached," he writes, "in Reading, and found great assistance from the Lord in speaking. I felt that God was among the people. One or two kneeled down with me when we prayed. The lion begins to roar very loud in this place, a sure sign that he is about to lose some of his subjects. I joined two in Society for a beginning. A man who has lately received the witness of his being in favor with the Lord led the way, and a woman who, I hope, was lately converted, followed."

January 28, 1790. "I set out," he writes, "and my soul was transported with joy; the snow falling, the wind blowing, prayer ascending, faith increasing, grace descending, heaven smiling, and love abounding. I preached at Jacob Wheeler's, in Limestone, and after meeting formed a class, two men and two women. Perhaps these may be like the leaven hid in the three measures of meal, that they may leaven the whole neighborhood." After seven months' hard labor, he has three classes with an aggregate of eight members.

Lee had reported to Asbury and asked for help. He was holding a quarterly-meeting at Dantown, the last of February, in an unfinished church—the second one begun in New England—when he heard the news, joyful news to a solitary laborer: “Help was coming.” He describes the occasion:

Just before the time of meeting a friend informed me that there were three preachers coming from a distance to labor with me in New England. I was greatly pleased at the report, and my heart seemed to reply, “Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.” When I saw them riding up I stood and looked at them, and could say from my heart, “Thou hast well done, that thou art come.” Jacob Brush, an elder, and George Roberts and Daniel Smith, two young preachers, came from Maryland, to assist me in this part of the world. No one knows, but God and myself, what comfort and joy I felt at their arrival.

Leaving the two circuits that he had organized in charge of these recruits—not quite an average of three members to each—Lee himself made a long excursion through the States of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont, and back again to Connecticut. His eye was fixed on Boston, where he arrived July, 1790. For several days he sought for a preaching-place, but no door was opened to him. Boston was not conscious of wanting any thing in the way of religious instruction that a Methodist and an Arminian would offer.

After spending a week trying to find a place to preach, and being refused on every side, he borrowed a table, and placing it under the old elm near the center of the Common, he mounted it and began to sing and pray with a congregation of four persons: at the close of service it had increased to three thousand. The next Sabbath he repeated the experiment; but he did not effect a permanent footing, and passed on to Lynn, Newburyport, and Portsmouth. On his return, he tried Boston again, and had to resort to the old stand on the Common. On making another evangelizing tour, he returned to Boston, where he spent four weeks; but every house was closed against him. It was on the verge of winter and the Common was deserted, save by those who hurried across it, wrapped in cloaks, to their warm, cozy homes. Sad and weary, he sat down to ponder on what should next be done. In the midst of these discouragements, aggravated by an empty purse, he received a letter from a gentleman in Lynn, inviting him to his house. This was a ray of light; he went, letter in hand, to Lynn, and was cordially received. Here he preached the first Methodist sermon ever delivered in that town, and, February 20,

1791, formed a Society of eight members, which was increased to seventy in three months. The 14th of June they began to build the first Methodist church in Massachusetts, and dedicated it on the 26th: a mere wooden shell, but better than nothing. Making Lynn his head-quarters, Lee sallied forth in all directions, not overlooking Boston.

Extemporaneous preaching, like every thing else that pertained to Methodism, was misunderstood. It was represented not as preaching without reading, but preaching without preparation. It pleased the people, but was a novelty and a stumbling-block to the parsons. One of them consented that Lee might preach in his church on condition that he should select the text and present it after Lee had entered the pulpit. To this he agreed. The matter was noised through the village, and the house was crowded to witness the discomfiture of the new-comer. The introductory services over, the minister handed Lee the text. It was Numbers xxii. 21: "And Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass." The parson composed himself in his seat with a look of grim satisfaction. Being well acquainted with the story of Balaam, Lee proceeded at once to describe his character, descanting largely on his avarice and love of the wages of unrighteousness, denouncing in severe language the baseness of the man who could use the prophetic office as a means of gain, and could endanger the very souls of the people of Israel, for the sake of the wages which Balak offered. He then proceeded to describe the oppressed, enslaved, and pitiable condition of the ass; spoke affectingly of the patience of the creature under burdens, and spurs, and whippings, and abuses; said the ass usually endured without complaining at the abuse heaped on him. Indeed, except the one in the history of Balaam, there had never been an instance of an ass speaking and expostulating under ill treatment. He alluded to the saddle, and described how galling it might become, especially under the weight of a large, fat, heavy man. At this point he cast a knowing look at the minister, a corpulent person. Having gone through with an exposition of the subject, he proceeded to the application. He said the idea might be new to them—it had never struck him till the text was given him; but he thought Balaam might be considered a type and representative of their minister. Balaam's ass, in many respects, reminded him of themselves, the congregation of that town; and the saddle

bound on the poor ass, by cords and girts, evidently represented the minister's salary fastened on them by taxation. Its galling and oppressive influence they had often felt; in some instances, as he had been informed, the last and only cow of a poor man with a large family had been taken and sold to pay for the salary of the well-fed incumbent of the saddle.

After this specimen of his skill in extempore sermons, the demand for the article from that quarter ceased.

He could tell where the preachers of the standing order abused him most, by the size of his congregations; for, in spite of their prejudices, the traditional curiosity of the people brought them out to see and hear the much-abused "itinerant peddler" of pernicious dogmas. Abuse him they did, frequently, and warn the people against being partakers of his "damnable heresies." Now and then a deacon superior to the rest opened his house for the itinerant, for which, says Lee, he would be "much buffeted."

Such treatment could not damp the ardor of the evangelist. Upon a chilling reception he exclaims: "I bless God that he keeps my spirits up under all my discouragements! If the Lord did not comfort me in hoping against hope, or believing against appearances, I should depart from the work in this part of the world; but I still wait to see the salvation of the Lord."

Lee and his fellow-laborers extended their travels in many directions, so that five circuits were mapped out on the Minutes in the following year. Nearly two hundred souls had been united in classes—a large number, if we consider the obstacles which obstructed every movement of the few laborers in the field. Two chapels had been begun and were in condition to be used. At Conference (New York) Lee had a protracted interview with Bishop Asbury, who not only promised him more help but a visit next summer. Accordingly, in 1791, we find him for the first time on a tour through New England. On the 9th of June he arrived at New Haven, the famous seat of learning, and his appointment to preach having been published in the newspapers, he had the honor of the President of Yale College, some of the faculty and students, and a few prominent citizens, to hear him. They all listened respectfully, but their coolness, as compared with the warm hospitality to which he had been accustomed on his episcopal journeys in the Middle and Southern States, led him to make the following entry in his journal:

I talked away to them very fast. When I had done no man spoke to me. I thought to-day of dear Mr. Whitefield's words to Mr. Boardman and Mr. Pilmoor at their first coming over to America: "Ah!" said he, "if ye were Calvinists, ye would take the country before ye." We visited the college chapel at the hour of prayer; I wished to go through the whole, to inspect the interior arrangements, but no one invited me. The divines were grave, and the students were attentive; they used me like a fellow-Christian in coming to hear me preach, and like a stranger in other respects. Should Cokesbury or Baltimore ever furnish the opportunity, I in my turn will requite their behavior by treating them as friends, brothers, and gentlemen. The difficulty I met with in New Haven for lodging and for a place to hold meeting made me feel and know the worth of Methodists more than ever."

The first conference in New England was held in Lynn, August, 1792. Eight preachers were present besides Asbury. Of course Jesse Lee rejoices at the progress. Hope Hull has come up from Georgia to help him.

Boston yielded at last. Lee records the date: "On the 13th day of July, 1792, we joined a few in Society, and after a short time they began to increase in numbers. We met with uncommon difficulties here from the beginning, for the want of a convenient house to preach in. We began in private houses, and could seldom keep possession of them long. The Society then undertook to get them a meeting-house, but being poor, and but few in number, they could do but little." Three years later the corner-stone of their first chapel was laid.

Having established Societies at Middletown and Hartford, Boston and Lynn, and the surrounding country, Lee pushed next his outposts over into the Province of Maine, then a part of Massachusetts, consisting chiefly of dense forests, with a narrow fringe of settlements along the sea-coast and a few towns on the rivers in the interior. Providing himself with two good horses, which he tired out by turns, he explored this new country in all directions, and organized a circuit west of the Kennebec River, which he called Readfield, where the first conference in the Province of Maine was held in 1798. In this distant field he had among his hearers a rustic lad who was destined to be heard from in the history and development of Methodism.

Joshua Soule was born in Bristol, Maine, August 1, 1781, the fifth son of Joshua Soule, who was the eldest son of Joseph Soule, a descendant of George Soule, one of the Pilgrim Fathers who came over in the Mayflower. His father was captain of a mer-

chant vessel, and would have continued in a sea-faring life but for the loss of his vessels during the Revolutionary War. After this he devoted himself to the pursuit of agriculture, removing to Avon, a new settlement on the Sandy River, while Joshua was an infant in his mother's arms. He remarked to a friend: "They say I was born in the State of Maine; but I was a presiding elder before Maine was erected into a State. I was born in the State of Massachusetts—province, or district, of Maine." \*

His parents were rigid Calvinists. Joshua feared the Lord from his youth. Among his playmates and school-fellows he was called "the deacon." He never knew when he could not read. He read the Bible much, which kept alive those awakenings of which he never knew the beginning. Jesse Lee, in 1793, preached in his father's neighborhood and formed the first circuit in those parts, extending from Hallowell to Sandy River. There being no meeting-house of the people called Methodists then, a private house, about a mile and a half from the Soule residence, was both the preacher's home and chapel.

There Joshua attended, and heard Jesse Lee—the first Methodist preacher he ever saw or heard—Thomas Cope, Philip Wagger, and their successors, and found that he could assent to the view of the gospel which they presented. His mind had revolted at Calvinism. The opposite doctrine and its experience suited him "sentimentally." He found it in his intuitions, drew it from the Bible, and had met with it in books.

One morning, before sunrise, he awoke and as usual went out to pray. For the first time, the witness of the Spirit was vouchsafed to him. The sun rose on his joy. A new heaven and a new earth smiled around. The peace that passeth all understanding overflowed his soul.

He was minded to join the Church, and inclination and duty drew him to the Methodists. As a dutiful son—in his sixteenth year—he consulted his parents. His father was mortified, and tried to dissuade him from ever going among those people again. As for his mother, she wept sore and remonstrated, declaring that if he took that step she regarded her son as ruined—she wished he had never heard of a Methodist.

Without acting hastily, he reviewed the matter, but abode in the same conclusion. Duty seemed to be clear, though the way

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\* Funeral-services in *Christian Advocate* (Nashville), March 14, 1867

was painful. His own account is: "Before taking the final step, I had my father and mother apart, and laid the whole matter before them. With much respect, and many tears, I told them my convictions; and besides, requested them to name a single instance in which I had ever disobeyed them. But now I felt it my solemn duty to unite with the Methodist Church, and to gain their consent and approval would afford me more happiness than any thing else in the world."

His father's mortification grew toward indignation at the firm proposal; and as for his mother, she pleaded with him in tears, and used every entreaty to turn him aside. "It cost me something," he continued, "to be a Methodist—I became one fully expecting to be an exile from my father's house. Twice in my life have I been brought to a stand. Twice have my faith and resolution been put to the test—but I decided in both cases in the fear of God, and with reference to my accountability at his bar."

His heart was fixed and the step was taken, and contrary to expectation his parents ceased to oppose him; but he went alone to his meetings. Scarcely any thing was ever said about them. He joined the Church at one of the week-day meetings, to the joy and surprise of the neighbors.

One day, as the plow-teams were resting at a turning-place, his father passing near him, Joshua said: "Father, a distinguished man is to preach this afternoon. Will you go and hear him?" The father answered: "No, I have heard one or two of them; they are all alike—enthusiasts, and don't know how to preach." The son replied with deference, "Does your law judge a man before it hears him?" To which there was no answer. But evidently the old Captain was put to thinking. He was a man of decision, and had taught his children to be so too—but first, to be right. The noon hour, the unhitching and feeding time, came. After dinner, quite to Joshua's surprise, his father ordered two horses to be saddled, and went with his Methodist boy to the Methodist meeting.

Cyrus Stebbins, the preacher, excelled himself that day. Great as were the issues pending, and the solicitude felt by one of his hearers, at least, the preacher rose equal to the occasion. His text was the vision of dry bones (Ezek. xxxvii. 10). The elder Soule was all attention. There was power in the word. Preaching over, and the congregation dismissed, Joshua asked his fa-

ther if he would allow him to introduce him to the minister. He not only assented, but, to Joshua's equal astonishment and delight, asked the preacher to go home with him; and the invitation was accepted.

"Knowing my father's prejudices," he says, "I had my fears. He was a thoughtful man, and had read much in theology, and he considered the argument for Calvinism unanswerable. Already I saw a controversy in store; so I made it convenient to drop behind as the company rode along, and have a word with the preacher, putting him on his guard as to what was required and expected of him."

Supper over, the debate began in earnest, and Joshua was not an inattentive listener. It was prolonged till one o'clock next morning. He trembled for Stebbins once or twice, but the "circuit rider," well up in "Fletcher's Checks," brought forth truth unto victory. "With pleasure I saw my father hemmed in; he could go no farther. He was a candid man, and confessed himself foiled."

Prayer had been offered evening and morning, and as the preacher was taking leave, the solitary young Methodist could hardly believe his own ears when he heard his father invite him to make his house a stopping-place, and as it was larger than the one where meetings had heretofore been held, to move the circuit-preaching to his house! It was done. The notice was given, and the next appointment was a crowded one. Stebbins again had unction from on high and was equal to the occasion. All the neighbors were there, among them two or three Baptist preachers, and it was a day of the Son of man.

In less than six months after Joshua had joined the Methodists, his father and mother, and two older brothers, and two sisters, were numbered with them. His father was an official member till the day of his death.

So early did he begin to show qualities that made him a leader among men, a veritable *Joshua*, a captain of the Lord's host.

His call to preach was not attended by that conflict which is so common. He believed in a call to the ministry, by the Spirit. His account was brief: "The Lord called me to preach, and I went." June, 1799, he was admitted into the traveling connection, and appointed to Portland Circuit, in Maine. In 1804 he was presiding elder of the district, which embraced the



whole territory of the present State. He filled this office two years; and so successful was the Church during this period that in 1806 a new district was formed called Kennebec. On this district he was employed in 1806 and 1807. The succeeding four years were spent on the Portland District.

This brings him into the broader field and service of the entire Connection. He comes forward—a figure and an influence not to be lost sight of for the next half century. No grander man, or more exemplary Christian, or more useful bishop, has appeared in Methodism. His majestic form and bearing, and his finely chiseled features, with expression in every line, could not fail to arrest attention and command deference from civilized or savage men, who saw

The elements  
So mixed in him that Nature might stand up  
And say to all the world, "This is a man!"

Perhaps no one was ever more thoroughly attached to the Wesleyan system of doctrine and discipline than Joshua Soule. He loved Methodism because of its scriptural character, its aggressive power, and its diffusive spirit. He loved its simple theology, its sublime psalmody, its decent forms—for which, indeed, he was somewhat of a stickler—and its elevated standard of experimental and practical piety. His own personal religious character was formed upon it. And when he drew near his end, he rejoiced in the belief that it was renewing its youth, and going forth afresh like a strong man to run a race.

The history of American Methodism cannot be written, even by unfriendly partisans, without making honorable mention of his name, or leaving a wide gap that cannot be filled; for in addition to his power as a gospel preacher, he possessed the "plain, heroic magnitude of mind," which shows its preëminence chiefly in affairs. He died in Nashville, March 6, 1867. His junior colleague, who closed his eyes, gives an account of the last hours of this eventful life:

There were no transports; but quietness and assurance and tranquillity marked the final hours. There were no fears, no gloomy uncertainties, no trepidations. He knew in whom he had believed. He had committed the keeping of soul and body to One who is faithful, and there he rested.

A little before midnight: "Bishop, is all clear before you?" Softly he answered, "Yes, yes" "Do you understand me, Bishop?" "I do, sir."

About one o'clock he seemed to be passing under the cloud and disappearing; I said, "Is all right, still?" Then for the last time did he throw that peculiar emphasis upon his words, "All right, sir; all right."

At intervals we gave him water, which he swallowed with an appearance of thirst. Soon after drinking it, about two o'clock, when his voice, though feeble, was distinct, seeing him cross his hands on his breast, I asked, "Are you praying?" He replied, "Not now," and never spoke more.

I was surprised at these words; they were not what I expected, for I knew he understood me and meant what he said. But as I looked on him lying there, and thought on the words "not now," they began to appear right, very right. His work was done; the night had come when no man can work. The servant who has loitered away the day begins to be very busy when the shadows lengthen. There is such a thing as having nothing to do but to die. Woe to the man who has his praying to do and his dying at the same time! He that believeth shall not make haste. Not praying now; that was done with, and the time for praising would soon set in. Like a ship, brave and stanch, that has weathered the storms and buffeted the waves, the voyage is ended; it nears the land, the busy wheels cease their revolutions, and under the headway and momentum already acquired, it glides to the anchorage.

Vermont furnished a Methodist not so forceful in character, or so lofty in leadership, as Joshua Soule, but of finer fiber and gentler mold—Wilbur Fisk. As a well-poised and well-rounded man, great in all good directions, his superior has not been seen in the pulpits and councils of the Church. Every soul, while in the body, must be born and live in some section, and to that extent is sectional; but Wilbur Fisk's altitude and breadth enabled him to see both sides of every question, and to take in both parties of every discussion, that concerned Methodism, in his day. He lived for many years in the enjoyment of "perfect love;" exemplifying a Wesleyan doctrine in experience, while with the pen of Fletcher he fought the doctrinal battles with a new type of Calvinism and Universalism which Lee had left for his learned successors to finish up. More than any other man, he quickened and shaped his Church in the direction of higher Christian education; and if Asbury never enjoyed at Cokesbury his sweet and lawful revenge on the New Haven professors, he might have had it at Middletown, under Wilbur Fisk. He died in 1838; and it is hard to realize that a man of feeble health should have done such a work and acquired such a just fame, living but forty-six years.

Hard work and poor pay was the rule of itinerant life in the West; and the planting of Methodism in the East formed no exception. Take a page from the experience of Elijah Hedding

who though not a native New Englander became one by adoption, the year Lee invaded that region. His awakening began at an after-sermon class-meeting, old style, held by Benjamin Abbott, under whose ministry his mother had been brought into the Church. Having gone round the class, Abbott approached the nine-year-old boy: "Well, do you think you are a sinner?" "Yes, sir." Then with a pretty heavy emphasis the preacher concluded: "There's many a boy in hell not as old as you are." This frightened him, and as Elijah Hedding testifies, "produced real religious concern, as I doubt not it was accompanied by the operation of God's Spirit?" At fifteen, being a good reader, he read one of Wesley's sermons, at the prayer-meetings. At eighteen, during a religious meeting, he "received religious comfort," and gave his name as a probationer; "not having a clear consciousness of his acceptance and conversion." He adds: "About six weeks after this, while conversing with a brother about the witness of the Spirit, the light of the Spirit broke in upon my mind as clear and perceptible as the sun when it comes from behind a cloud, testifying that I was born of God; and it was done at the time before named, when my guilt was removed and I found peace in believing." At nineteen, though only an exhorter, he began his ministry by supplying a circuit which Lorenzo Dow had left to go "ranging;" for among the fruits of Lee's ministry in Connecticut, was that unique character.

Elijah Hedding endured hardness the first ten years of his circuit-riding. Reviewing these years he says:

I have averaged over three thousand miles' travel a year, and preached, on an average, a sermon a day, since I commenced the itinerant life. During that period I have traveled circuits that joined each other, through a tract of country beginning near Troy, New York, and going north into Canada; thence east through Vermont and New Hampshire; and thence southerly, through Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut, to Long Island Sound. I have never in this time owned a traveling vehicle, but have ridden on horseback, except occasionally in winter when I have borrowed a sleigh, and also in a few instances when I have traveled by public conveyance or in a borrowed carriage. I have both labored hard and fared hard. Much of the time I have done missionary work without missionary money. Until recently I have had no dwelling-place or home, but as a wayfaring man lodged from night to night where hospitality and friendship opened the way. In most of these regions the Methodists were few and comparatively poor. I was often obliged to depend on poor people for food and lodging and horse-keeping; and though in general they provided for me cheerfully and willingly, yet I often felt that I was taking what they needed for their children.

and that my horse was eating what they needed for their own beasts. I often suffered great trials of mind on this account, and have traveled many a day without dinner, because I had not a quarter of a dollar that I could spare to buy it.

His average pay was about forty-five dollars a year; and one year he received, exclusive of traveling expenses, three dollars and twenty-five cents! The first year he was on the New Hampshire District (1807) he received four dollars and twenty-five cents! He says: "My pantaloons were often patched upon the knees, and the sisters showed their kindness by turning an old coat for me!" Authentic reports from the preachers of the New England Conference, from 1800 to 1805, show that the annual receipts of each of them did not average seventy dollars, including all presents, and that the aggregate sum paid to all of them, numbering about twenty-five, in each of these years, was less than the amount now received by one minister stationed in some of the Methodist churches in cities, where Jesse Lee effected a grudging entrance, as a man drives a wedge into a hard log.\*

In June, 1810, the Rev. Henry Boehm, accompanying the Bishop, attended a session of the New England Conference:

There was a camp-meeting held in connection with it, about three miles distant, and they had preaching there three times a day during its session. On Sunday, the 10th, Bishop Asbury preached with life and energy; after which six deacons and twelve elders were ordained. There were about fifteen hundred persons present. Six sermons were preached that day.

On Monday morning, after the bishops, Asbury and McKendree, had delivered their valedictory addresses, which were distinguished for appropriateness and pathos, Bishop Asbury read off the appointments for eighty-seven preachers, who all went cheerfully to their work in the spirit of their Master.

On the 16th, Bishop Asbury, George Pickering, and myself went to Boston, and were the guests of Elijah Sabin, the stationed preacher. The new chapel was greatly in debt, and Brother Pickering had been South soliciting funds; and yet such were the pressing wants of the Church that Bishop Asbury wrote five letters supplicating a collection for the new chapel—namely, to Baltimore, Georgetown, Alexandria, Norfolk, and Charleston; and I believe they all responded.

In 1832 the presiding elder of the New Haven District wrote that its territory was then almost entirely included in Lee's second circuit, organized in 1789 and compassed by the itinerant every two weeks. It contained fifteen circuits and stations, employed thirty-four traveling preachers, had between thirty and forty local preachers, six thousand members, and fifty chapels.†

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\*American Methodism, by Rev. M. L. Scudder, D.D. † Letter of Rev Heman Bangs, quoted in Stevens's History of the M. E. Church.

Having spent eight years in New England, he takes a wider field. The Minutes for 1797, 1798, and 1799 say: "Jesse Lee, travels with Bishop Asbury." This brought him, in the Bishop's absence on account of sickness, to preside in the Conference of 1797, at Wilbraham. He loved to visit it. In 1808 he found six districts, presided over by such men as John Broadhead, Elijah R. Sabin, Thomas Branch, Elijah Hedding, Joshua Soule, and Oliver Beale. He also found eight thousand eight hundred and sixty-one members. Martin Ruter was stationed at Boston with over three hundred and forty members, all of whom received him as their father. He passed on to Lynn, to be greeted by Dan Young, the pastor, and one hundred and seventy members. A crowd attended him everywhere, so that the churches could not accommodate them. He spent forty-three days in Maine, and preached forty-seven sermons. Hurrying to New Hampshire, he preached seven farewell sermons in less than a week, and about the same number in less time in Connecticut.

Though so unwelcome, Methodism was nowhere more needed than in New England. The reaction from high Calvinism to Unitarianism and Rationalism was going on at its advent, and the evil was modified by its influence. Effete and dead forms of worship received an infusion of new life. Into a region of great mental activity an element entered restraining and sanctifying, which, though not acknowledged by the self-satisfied philosophers, has nevertheless been felt. A party, not small in numbers or influence, had arisen, contending that if a man were educated for it the lack of conversion was no bar to his entrance upon the ministry. Whitefield numbered over twenty ministers converted under his preaching. If sharp assailants of the faith have issued from New England, so have strong defenders.

In 1809 Lee was chosen chaplain to Congress, an office which he held until 1815, and then resigned. His death occurred in September, 1816, at the age of fifty-eight; and his grave, in Mount Olivet Cemetery, Baltimore, was honored with an elegant shaft of Scotch granite, erected by the second generation of his spiritual children in Boston.

[The materials for this Chapter are furnished by the Histories of Jesse Lee, Bangs, Stevens, Porter, Daniels, Scudder; The Life and Times of Jesse Lee, by L. M. Lee, D.D.; and Asbury's Journal.]

## CHAPTER XXXI.

The Valley of the Mississippi: Occupying it—Gate-way to the North-west and the South-west—Indian Troubles—Asbury Crossing the Wilderness—Bethel Academy—Kentucky—Tennessee—Three Local Preachers Shaping Ohio—Missionaries—McHenry, Burke, Wilkerson, Page, Tobias Gibson, Valentine Cook.

THE occupancy of the Valley of the Mississippi by the gospel was the great problem for the American Church. The wave of revival that rolled back from the West to the East, at the close of the last century, was evidence of the extent of the movement and of the divine forces at work there.

Besides the vices naturally engendered in the rapid settlement of a new country, where the hope of wealth is excited by rich lands, and the revengeful passions are stirred by a sense of danger from a lingering but weakening foe, the West had to encounter the peril of a bold infidelity. The French Revolution was popular. The American people remembered France as their late ally, and regarded her as a sister republic contending for freedom against banded despots. "The terrible energy which the French Republic displayed against such fearful odds, the haughty crest with which she confronted her enemies, and repelled them from her frontier at every point, presented a spectacle well calculated to dazzle the friends of democracy throughout the world." France had embraced infidelity. The Bible there had been repudiated, and death declared to be "an eternal sleep;" and atheism was openly professed among all classes of society. The moral effect of all this was felt in the hunting-camps and in the log-cabins of Kentucky and Tennessee. The writings of Paine, Voltaire, and such like, intended to sap the foundations of Christianity, were sown broadcast through the land. Not only did their sentiments find favor with the masses of the people, but many, holding high positions of public trust, and belonging to the more influential walks of life, imbibed these doctrines, and openly avowed their disbelief in the word of God.

While the leaven of infidelity was working, the testimony of a competent witness, who was reared amid the vigorous scenes of this Western life, shows why Methodism had a special call to counteract it: "To add to the darkness of the moral horizon.

most of the Churches had sunk into mere formality, so that the doctrine of the new birth—implying that radical change of heart which brings with it the evidence of pardon and adoption—was quite ignored or totally repudiated. The dogmas of election and reprobation, predestination and decrees, were the themes of the pulpit; and they rather confirmed than weakened the popular disposition to reject revelation. The masses considered such doctrines a slander upon God's justice, as well as upon his goodness, and concluded that if the Bible afforded such views of Jehovah it could not be true."\*

Francis Clark, a local preacher, was the pioneer of Methodism in Kentucky. As early as 1783, accompanied by John Durham, a class-leader, and others of his neighbors, he left Virginia, and settled in Mercer county, and organized a class, the first in the far West, about six miles from Danville. "He was a man," says a chronicler of the time, "of sound judgment, and well instructed in the doctrines of the Church. As a preacher he was successful in forming several societies, and lived many years to rejoice in the success of the cause that he had been the instrument, under God, of commencing in the wilderness. He died at his own home, the last year of the century, in great peace, and in hope of a blessed immortality." William J. Thompson also emigrated at an early day from North Carolina, and settled in the same neighborhood. A useful local preacher, he afterward joined the traveling connection in the Western Conference; and moving to the State of Ohio, became connected with the Ohio Conference, where his labors and usefulness are held in remembrance by many. Other local preachers and faithful laymen came and settled in Jessamine and Fayette and Nelson counties.†

The first itinerants sent out in 1786, Haw and Ogden, were re-enforced by transfers as needed. Peter Massie was converted and brought into the ministry by the missionaries. He was styled "the weeping prophet." One who knew him well, says: "I heard him preach the gospel frequently, and I do not think I ever heard him but when tears rolled down his manly cheeks, while he warned the people to flee from the wrath to come."

In 1787 Kentucky District was divided into two circuits, one of which still bore the name of Kentucky. James Haw was re-

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\* Rev. Jonathan Stamper, in *Home Circle*, Vol. I. † Redford's History of Methodism in Kentucky.

turned as elder. Thomas Williamson and Wilson Lee were appointed to one circuit; the other was called Cumberland, to which Benjamin Ogden was appointed. The Cumberland Circuit embraced the country now known as Middle Tennessee, and a small portion of Southern Kentucky. The Kentucky Circuit included the whole of the District of Kentucky, except that part embraced in the Cumberland. Francis Poythress, in 1788, superseded Haw, and was henceforth in charge of the district until his overworked body and mind gave way.

The hard Church laws of Virginia had massed the Baptists and Presbyterians west of the Blue Ridge, where they were comparatively free from exactions and persecutions. They were ready to pour over into Kentucky, so soon as that fertile territory was opened, and to occupy it. Rev. David Rice immigrated to Kentucky from Virginia in 1783, and settled in Mercer county. Previous to this date small bodies of Presbyterians had settled in the neighborhoods of Danville and Cane Run, and in 1786 the Presbytery of Transylvania was organized.

As early as 1776 the Rev. William Hickman came from Virginia on a tour of observation, and devoted much of his time to preaching the gospel. He was perhaps the first preacher of any denomination to lift the standard of the cross on "the dark and bloody ground." Other Baptist ministers soon followed him, and the Baptist Church was organized in 1781, near Lancaster. One of the first governors of the State was a Baptist minister—Garrard.

In the spring of 1790, Bishop Asbury extended his travels to Kentucky, when, for the first time, an Annual Conference was held there. He was accompanied by Richard Whatcoat and Hope Hull. The Conference commenced 15th of May, at Masterson's Station, five miles north-west of Lexington, where the first Methodist church in Kentucky—a plain log structure—was erected. Two years before, Asbury had crossed the mountains to meet a Conference in the Holston Valley; now, he must cross a wilderness beyond that. The first trip involved labor and fatigue; the last, these and more. April 6th, he says: "I received a faithful letter from Brother Poythress in Kentucky, encouraging me to come. Now it is we must prepare for danger in going through the wilderness." Resting at General Russell's, and recruiting; preaching in the Nollichucky and Clinch and Holston valleys, which seem now to become a starting-point, he waits for



an escort that is to guide and protect evangelists on the journey: "May 3.—Sabbath night I dreamed the guard from Kentucky came for me; and mentioned it to Brother Whatcoat. In the morning I retired to a small stream for meditation and prayer, and whilst there saw two mèn come over the hills; I felt a presumption that they were Kentucky men, and so they proved to be; they were Peter Massie and John Clark, who were coming for me, with the intelligence that they had left eight men below; after reading the letters, and asking counsel of God, I consented to go with them."

The company, mustering sixteen men with thirteen guns, "moved on very swiftly, considering the roughness of the way." On the seventh day of their journey, they reached Richmond, the county-seat of Madison county, and three days afterward, Lexington. The Bishop says: "I was strangely outdone for want of sleep, having been greatly deprived of it in my journey through the wilderness—which is like being at sea in some respects, and in others worse. Our way is over mountains, steep hills, deep rivers, and muddy creeks—a thick growth of reeds for miles together, and no inhabitants but wild beasts and savage men. I slept about an hour the first night, and about two the last. We ate no regular meals; our bread grew short, and I was much spent."

On the road-side they saw the graves of twenty-four travelers who, a short time before, had been massacred by the Indians. We quote from the Bishop's journal:

May 13.—Being court time, I preached in a dwelling-house at Lexington, and not without some feeling. The Methodists do but little here—others lead the way. Our Conference was held at Brother Masterson's, a very comfortable house, and kind people. We went through our business in great love and harmony. I ordained Wilson Lee, Thomas Williamson, and Barnabas McHenry, elders. We had preaching noon and night, and souls were converted, and the fallen restored. My soul has been blessed among these people, and I am exceedingly pleased with them. I would not, for the worth of all the place, have been prevented in this visit, having no doubt but that it will be for the good of the present and rising generation. It is true, such exertions of mind and body are trying; but I am supported under it—if souls are saved, it is enough. Brother Poythress is much alive to G. d. We fixed a plan for a school, and called it Bethel; and obtained a subscription of upward of £300, in land and money, toward its establishment.

A new name is here introduced, and one identified with Western Methodism. Referring to the early ministers who opened and subdued the wilderness, the late Bishop Bascom said: "They

labored, suffered, triumphed, in obscurity and want. No admiring populace to cheer them on; no feverish community gazetted them into fame. Principle alone sustained them, and their glory was that of action." In his commanding personal appearance and influence, in the order of his talents, and the grace and power that accompanied his ministry, Barnabas McHenry was eminent. He was born in North Carolina, 1767. In the twentieth year of his age he entered on his itinerant career. His first appointment was to the Yadkin Circuit. He spent the following year in Kentucky, and after efficient, self-denying toil, on circuits and districts, died of cholera in 1833. The venerable Jacob Young's autobiography, describing an occasion, says: "The most distinguished man I met was B. McHenry. He was a man by himself." Dr. Bascom published a monograph of this man who did much to stimulate and direct his own mind. He describes his preaching as mainly expository and didactic:

The whole style of his preaching denoted the confidence of history and experience. All seemed to be real and personal to him. The perfect simplicity, and yet clear, discriminating accuracy of his manner and language made the impression that he was speaking only of what he knew to be true. He spoke of every thing as of a natural scene before him. There was an intensity of conception, a sustained sentiment of personal interest, which gave one a feeling of wonder and awe in listening to him. You could not doubt his right to guide and teach. One felt how safe and proper it was to follow such leading. His style was exceedingly rich without being showy. There was no effervescence. It was not the garden and landscape in bloom, but in early bud, giving quiet but sure indication of fruit and foliage. His language was always accurate, well chosen, strong, and clear. All his sermons, as delivered, were in this respect fit for the press—not only remarkably free from error on the score of thought, but from defect and fault of style and language. His whole manner, too, was natural, dignified, and becoming. Good taste and sound judgment were his main mental characteristics. Of imagination proper he had but little, and still less of fancy. Reason, fitness, and beauty were the perceptions by which he was influenced. The intrinsic value of things alone attracted him. The outward show of things made little or no impression upon him, under any circumstances. The inner man—the hidden things of the heart—controlled him in all his judgments and preferences.\*

In the bend of Kentucky River, Mr. Lewis, an old Leesburg acquaintance, welcomed the Bishop, and offered one hundred acres of land for the site of Bethel College.

"Had a noble shout at Brown's—four souls converted," says his journal. "Reached the Crab Orchard, and lodged under a

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\* Editorial in the *Southern Methodist Quarterly Review*, Vol. III.

tree" preparatory to recrossing the wilderness; "had about fifty people in the company—twenty were armed, and five might have stood fire." They make for Cumberland Gap:

To preserve order and harmony, we had articles drawn up for and signed by our company and I arranged the people for traveling according to the regulations agreed upon. The first night we lodged some miles beyond the Hazelpatch. The next day we discovered signs of Indians, and some thought they heard voices; we therefore thought it best to travel on, and did not encamp until three o'clock, halting on the east side of Cumberland River. We had an alarm, but it turned out to be a false alarm. Brother Massie was captain; and finding I had gained authority among the people, I acted somewhat in the capacity of an adjutant and quartermaster amongst them. At the foot of the mountain the company separated; the greater part went on with me to Powell's River.

May 28–30 were spent at General Russell's, "whose wife is converted since I left the house last. I thought then," he adds, "that she was not far from the kingdom of God."

The last day of the month, passing through New River Circuit, Asbury gets a last view of that noble itinerant who has in fourteen years preached the gospel in eight out of thirteen States—John Tunnell. He is dying of consumption; "a mere shadow, but very humble and patient under his affliction." "June 1.—I rode about forty-five miles to Armstrong's, and next day about four o'clock reached McKnight's on the Yadkin River, in North Carolina; here the Conference had been waiting for me nearly two weeks; we rejoiced together, and my brethren received me as one brought from the jaws of death."

Let us leave the field on the Atlantic slope, now everywhere being cultivated or laid off for cultivation, and return to the Kentucky District—destined to be the distributing point of laborers for the North-west and the South-west.

Mountain ranges did not determine the course and order of the westward movement, but Indian tribes. The Church has been planted in Georgia, and the Mississippi Territory forms the western boundary of Georgia; but the gospel will be carried to Mississippi first by way of Tennessee and down the great river; because the Creek or Muskogee Indians lie on the direct route below, and the Choctaws and Cherokees above. The North-western Territory will be approached by way of Kentucky, because the Miami and Shawnee Indians and confederate tribes north of the Ohio hold the country down to the river bank, and make the water passage dangerous. Though surrounded on three sides by

Indian tribes, Kentucky was never claimed or occupied by any tribe. It was a common hunting-ground, and on account of frequent hostile collisions was called the "Dark and Bloody Ground." Warlike incursions were often made across the frontiers; and through the intervening wilderness roving bands of Indians for a long time kept a path of communication between the tribes on the lower Holston and Tennessee rivers, and those dwelling on the Scioto and Miami. This path had to be crossed with more or less peril in going from the East to Kentucky. There were smaller campaigns, but in 1791 General St. Clair left Fort Washington, as the military post was called where Cincinnati now is, with an army of two thousand volunteers to subdue and break up the Miami Confederacy. A hundred miles north of his starting-point, while encamped on a tributary of the Wabash, he was surprised by the Indians, under their chief—Little Turtle—and after three hours desperate fighting half of his army was killed and the remnant barely escaped massacre. This terrible disaster threw a gloom over the whole West, and indeed over the entire country. President Washington, when the dispatches reached him, lost his usual equanimity and exclaimed: "Here, in this very room, I took leave of General St. Clair, wishing him success and honor! I said to him: 'You have careful instructions from the Secretary of War, and I myself will add one word, *Beware of a surprise.* You know how the Indians fight—*beware of a surprise.*' He went off with that, my last warning, ringing in his ears; and yet he has suffered that army to be butchered, tomahawked, by a surprise. How can he answer to his country?"

In 1794 General Wayne, called "Mad Anthony," after ineffectual efforts for peace, led an army of three thousand into the same field, and defeated the Miamis, and broke up their confederacy; obtained a cession from the chiefs of the present State of Ohio; pressed them back into the vast Indiana Territory, with Vincennes as Government head-quarters, and exacted other terms that gave a general peace. At a later date, General Jackson broke the power of the hostile Indian tribes in the South. Thenceforth, under the protection of treaties and agencies, emigrants passed through the land, not always without danger; and where the emigrant went, the itinerant preacher followed.

Virginia having relinquished her claim to its territory, Kentucky was admitted into the Union as a State in 1792, with

seventy-three thousand inhabitants. North Carolina having relinquished her claim to its territory, Tennessee was admitted in 1796; six years before, the population was thirty-five thousand, but it was soon doubled.

Now the movement to the North-west began. Notwithstanding the additions during several years by revivals and immigrations, the Kentucky District, though served by an able and faithful ministry, hardly held its own. In some places, societies were entirely broken up, and in others, only portions were left, by removals from the State. Large bodies of Methodists from Kentucky settled in what is now the State of Ohio, in the Mad River country, and on the Big and Little Miamis; so that, notwithstanding the success that crowned the labors of the preachers, in their annual exhibits they often showed a decrease of membership in their fields of labor.

The names of Henry Birchett, David Haggard, Samuel Tucker, and Joseph Lillard, appear on the roll in this department of the work, for the first time, among the appointments made by Bishop Asbury on his present visit to the Kentucky District.\* Joseph Lillard was a Kentuckian by birth; born near Harrodsburg.

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\* Francis Poythress, Elder; Danville—Thomas Williamson, Stephen Brooks; Cumberland—Wilson Lee, James Haw, Peter Massie; Madison—Barnabas McHenry, Benjamin Snelling; Limestone—Samuel Tucker, Joseph Lillard; Lexington—Henry Birchett, David Haggard.

Cumberland Circuit lay chiefly in Tennessee. It extended, however, into Kentucky, and embraced, besides Middle Tennessee, what is now known as Logan, Warren, and Simpson counties. B. McHenry, who preached in it next year (1791), says: "The circuit was a four-weeks' circuit. Clarksville, near the mouth of Red River, was the lower extremity of the circuit, and of the settlement. Sumner Court-house was a cabin near Station Camp Creek. The upper end of the circuit was the eastern extremity of the settlement near Bledsoe's Lick. The population for some miles down consisted of a narrow string between the river and the ridge. Indeed, there was then no population on the south side of Cumberland River, Nashville and a very small part of the adjacent country excepted. There were four regular preaching-places on that side of the river. In the course of that year two class-leaders belonging to the circuit were killed. In some places the preachers could not retire to the woods or fields for the purpose of reading, meditation, and prayer, without probable danger of being shot or tomahawked. This was the more sensibly felt, as the houses in such places afforded little or no convenience for retirement. Our advantages consisted principally in peace and love. My helper on Cumberland Circuit, Brother O'Cull, labored with great zeal till some time in the fall of 1791, when he broke himself down so entirely that he never recovered."

He was sent to the Limestone Circuit (Maysville), with Samuel Tucker. He traveled his second year on the Salt River Circuit, after which his name disappears from the Minutes, and he settled not far from the place of his birth, where he lived to a good age. In his local relation, by the sanctity of his life and by his devotion to the Church, Lillard was very useful. In his home the itinerant found a welcome, and his liberality contributed to the promotion of the cause. Samuel Tucker, his colleague, was, like Lillard, a new recruit. He reached the circuit only in time to find a grave. The parents of the late Edward Stevenson, D.D.—converts of Strawbridge—had floated down the Ohio River with a company of emigrants in time to welcome the first missionaries who came to Mason county, Kentucky. He describes the tragic fate of Samuel Tucker:

Widely different, however, was the fate of the next lot of boats that attempted the same dangerous passage. A little below the mouth of the Scioto, they were attacked by the Indians, in great numbers, from both sides of the river, as well as from their bark canoes in the stream itself. Two of the boats were soon overpowered, and an indiscriminate slaughter of men, women, and children ensued. The third and only remaining boat of the company was closely pursued for several hours. The most of the men were either killed or wounded, and the remaining force was not sufficient to manage the oars and successfully resist a direct assault from their blood-thirsty pursuers. The women came to the rescue from their places of protection. Some took the oars and others reloaded the guns, leaving the few fighting men who had been preserved from the balls of the enemy nothing to do but to watch the movements of the insidious foe and fire to the best advantage. The Indians at length began to haul off: the fire from the boat had become too constant and well-directed; and soon the last warlike craft disappeared on the distant waters, and the bullet-riven boat was left to float on without further molestation. Early the next day they landed at the "Point" [Maysville]. My father was among the first on board. The scene was inexpressibly horrible. The living, as well as the dead and dying, were literally covered with blood. Among the latter was Samuel Tucker. He had received a wound in his chest soon after the commencement of the attack; but, nothing daunted by the near and certain approach of death, he continued to fight on—loading and firing his own long rifle, until his fading vision shut out the enemy from his sight. He breathed his last, in submission to the Divine will, soon after the boat reached the landing, and was buried by my father and others amid the lofty forest-trees that then overhung, in primitive grandeur and sublimity, the beautiful bottom where now the tide of business and commerce rolls on unmindful of the past. The place of his interment is known to none now living.\*

Among the preachers admitted on trial with Wm. McKendree, Virginia, in 1788, were Henry Birchett, Aquila Sugg, Valentine

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\* Itinerant Sketches in *Christian Advocate* (Nashville), Oct. 9. 1856.

Cook, and John McGee; all of whom, like himself, were in after years laborers in the West. Henry Birchett, after a few years on the Western frontiers, died in the work. The remains of this godly man, who fell in 1794, repose in an old grave-yard about three miles below Nashville. Some kind hand erected a simple tombstone, and inscribed it with his initials. His biography says of him—and it is among the earliest found in the Minutes: “He was a gracious, happy, useful man, who freely offered himself for four years’ service on the dangerous stations of Kentucky and Cumberland. He was one among the worthies who freely left ease, safety, and prosperity, to seek after and suffer faithfully for souls. His meekness, love, labors, prayers, tears, sermons, and exhortations will not be soon forgotten.”\*

Peter Massie’s race was soon run. “A feeling, pathetic preacher; a good singer; and remarkable for his zeal,” is the testimony of the veterans who survived him. Though stationed in Kentucky, he died in the bounds of the Cumberland Circuit, on which he traveled the previous year. On the 18th of December, 1791, he reached the house of Mr. Hodges, four miles west of Nashville. The family was in the fort for protection. The only person at the cabin, besides Mr. Hodges—who was sick—was a negro named Simeon, who had that evening escaped from the Indians. Simeon had become acquainted with the preacher the past year, and had been converted through his instrumentality. Massie was “an afflicted man,” and on reaching the house of his friend, he complained of indisposition. Next morning in conversation it was said “that he would soon be well enough to travel, if he recovered so fast.” To which he replied, “If I am not well enough to travel, I am happy enough to die.”† These were his last words. In a few moments he fell from his seat, and suddenly expired. Nearly a half century later the Tennessee Conference appointed a committee to seek for his grave, no stone having marked it. The committee searched in vain. The grave was never found, but the grave-digger was:

After an ineffectual search for years, the hope of success was abandoned. Seven years later, the Rev. Thomas L. Douglass was preaching near Nashville, and in the close of his sermon referred with much feeling to the hope of meeting in heaven with Asbury, McKendree, and others who had passed over the flood. In the congregation sat an aged African, with tears coursing down his cheeks. He

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\* Life and Times of Wm. McKendree, by Paine. † Rev. Learner Blackman’s unpublished manuscript; quoted by Redford in *History of Methodism in Kentucky*.

too was deeply moved, and thinking of another, exclaimed, in a clear voice, "Yes, and Brother Massie!" and then, continuing his soliloquy, he added: "Yes, Simeon, with these hands, with no one to help, you dug his grave, and laid him away in the ground; but you will see him again, for he lives in heaven!" A member of the Tennessee Conference\* sat just in front of old Simeon, and heard what he said. After the services he took him aside, and inquired what he knew of the burial of Peter Massie. He replied that he was at Mr. Hodges's at the death of Mr. Massie; that Mr. Hodges himself was unable to assist in his burial; and that he had no plank of which to make a coffin; that he cut down an ash-tree and split it into slabs, and placed them in the grave which he had dug, and after depositing the body, placed a slab over it, and then filled the grave with earth. He believed he could find the spot where the remains of Massie lay, but he could not. When he buried him the whole country was a wilderness, but at the time he made the search for his grave civilization had changed its entire appearance.

Simeon was a native African, and stated to the late Bishop Paine that he belonged to the nobility of that country. When only a child he was brought to the United States. Under the preaching of Peter Massie, in 1790, he had been awakened and converted. For more than fifty years he lifted the standard of the cross among the colored people of Tennessee, and exerted an influence that was felt far and near. With the people of his own color he enjoyed a popularity that belonged to no other man in the community, and over them he exercised an authority for good. The purity of his life so won upon the affections and confidence of his master that in early manhood he emancipated him and gave him a small farm near Nashville, which was voluntarily returned in his last will and testament. The concern that he felt for the African race was not confined to those around him, but his sympathy extended to his countrymen in their native land.

In 1823 he called on Bishop McKendree, and presented to him, in forcible language, the wants and condition of his people in Africa, and urged the appointment of a missionary to that benighted land. The Bishop became deeply interested in the scheme, and decided to comply with his wishes. The Rev. Robert (since Bishop) Paine was then stationed at Franklin and Lebanon. He offered himself for the work, making only one condition—that Simeon should accompany him. To this Simeon readily consented; but the arrangement was defeated by the remonstrance of the Church against the removal of their preacher.†

In his personal appearance he was superior to all his race around him. Although a full-blooded African, his face would have commanded attention anywhere. With a high and well-formed forehead; with penetrating, searching eyes; with a countenance full of the expression of benevolence; and with a mind far above ordinary, he would have commanded respect in any community. Added to these a life unblemished by vice, developing every day the practical duties and virtues of Christianity, it is no wonder that he enjoyed the confidence of those among whom he lived.

In 1847, after a long and useful life, he was called from "labor to reward." While dying, a member of the Church was kneeling beside him, who said to him. "Father Simeon, what hope have you beyond the grave?" With his eyes swimming in death, he raised his right-hand, "Up, up, up!" He spoke no more.

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\* Rev. A. L. P. Green, D.D.; quoted in Redford's History. † I have these facts from Bishop Paine.—*Redford's History*.



Bishop Asbury's second visit to Kentucky (1792) was with "guards," McHenry and Burke probably leading them:

April 4.—This morning we swam the [upper Cumberland] river, and also the West Fork thereof. My little horse was ready to fail in the course of the day. I was steeped in the water up to the waist. About seven o'clock, with hard pushing, we reached the Crab Orchard. How much I have suffered in this journey is only known to God and myself. What added much to its disagreeableness, I was seized with a severe flux, which followed me eight days: for some time I kept up, but at last found myself under the necessity of taking to my bed.

April 10.—I endured as severe pain as perhaps I ever felt. I made use of small portions of rhubarb, and also obtained some good claret, of which I drank a bottle in three days, and was almost well, so that on Sunday following I preached a sermon an hour long. In the course of my affliction I have felt myself very low. I have had serious views of eternity, and was free from the fear of death.

April 23.—I rode to Bethel. I found it necessary to change the plan of the house, to make it more comfortable to the scholars in cold weather. I am too much in company, and hear so much about Indians, convention, treaty, killing, and scalping, that my attention is drawn more to these things than I could wish. I found it good to get alone in the woods and converse with God.

Bethel was a place for holding Conference, and for awhile there was hope of it as an educational center. The order of history may be anticipated a little concerning Bethel. It was located on a high bluff in a bend of Kentucky River, Jessamine county. Wm. Burke gives this account of it at a later day:

The design was to accommodate the students in the house with boarding, etc. The first and second stories were principally finished, and a spacious hall in the center. The building of this house rendered the pecuniary means of the preachers very uncertain, for they were continually employed in begging for Bethel. The people were very liberal, but they could not do more than they did. The country was new, and the unsettled state of the people, in consequence of the Indian wars and depredations, kept the country in a continual state of agitation. The Legislature at an early period made a donation of six thousand acres of land to Bethel Academy. The land was located in Christian county, south of Green River, and remained a long time unproductive, and while I continued a trustee, till 1804, it was rather a bill of expense than otherwise. In 1803 I was appointed by the Western Conference to attend the Legislature and obtain an act of incorporation. I performed that duty, and Bethel was incorporated, with all the powers and privileges of a literary institution. The Rev. Valentine Cook was the first that organized the academical department, and at first the prospect was flattering. A number of students were in attendance; but difficulties occurred which it would be needless to mention, as all the parties concerned have gone to give an account at a higher tribunal.

Valentine Cook was educated at Cokesbury. He did memorable service in Virginia and Western Pennsylvania, both as a

preacher and polemic—rather eccentric in manner, mighty in the Scriptures, and of more learning than any of his ministerial associates. He labored extensively and very successfully in planting Methodism in the West. His memory is a sweet savor throughout the wide region of his labors.

A capital mistake about this second Cokesbury—often repeated since—was its location. The attempt to get away from temptation took the projectors into the woods. The hermit ideal is as impracticable for schools as for persons. And they were betrayed into the fatal location by an act of apparent liberality. The holders of real estate see their interest in offering inducements for the location of an institution, while a whole Church works to sustain an uphill business and—to raise the price of lots. Some gifts are very costly, in the long run. Eight years after this, Bishop Asbury made a fourth visit to Kentucky:

Oct. 4.—I was so dejected I could do little but weep. Sabbath-day it rained, and I kept at home. Here is Bethel: Cokesbury in miniature; eighty by thirty feet, three stories, with a high roof, and finished below. Now we want a fund and an income of three hundred per year to carry it on, without which it will be useless. But it is too distant from public places. Its being surrounded by the Kentucky River, in part, we now find to be no benefit. Thus all our excellences are turned into defects. Perhaps Brother Poythress and myself were as much overseen with this place as Dr. Coke was with the seat of Cokesbury. But all is right that works right, and all is wrong that works wrong; and we must be blamed by men of slender sense for consequences impossible to foresee—for other people's misconduct. Monday and Tuesday we were shut up in Bethel with the traveling and local ministry, and the trustees that could be called together. We ordained fourteen or fifteen local and traveling deacons. It was thought expedient to carry the first design of education into execution, and that we should employ a man of sterling qualifications, to be chosen by and under the direction of a select number of trustees and others, who should obligate themselves to see him paid, and take the profits, if any, arising from the establishment. Dr. [Samuel K.] Jennings was thought of, talked of, and written to.

The site of Bethel can barely be identified; not one stone is left upon another where Asbury wept over disappointment and failure. This second visitation completed, he returns to the Holston Valley, and thence to the East, through the inevitable wilderness. Leaving Crab Orchard, the company make for Cumberland Gap: "thirty-six good travelers, and a few warriors."

The first night out the Bishop notes: "I stretched myself on the ground, and borrowing clothes to keep me warm, by the mercy of God I slept four or five hours. Next morning we set off

early, and passed beyond Richland Creek. Here we were in danger, if anywhere. I could have slept, but was afraid. Seeing the drowsiness of the company, I walked the encampment and watched the sentries the whole night."

He left the Western work well manned. There were two districts: Barnabas McHenry presided in Holston, and Francis Poythress in Kentucky. Wm. Burke, John Ray, John Page, and Benjamin Northcutt, appeared for the first time—a strong reënforcement.

Northcutt, a native of North Carolina, followed in the track of Daniel Boone, at sixteen, and was converted at twenty. Though he traveled but a short time under the rule of Conference, yet his domestic and neighborhood itinerancy continued to bless the Church. In the local relation he often devoted weeks together in attending meetings both near and remote from his home. On camp-meeting occasions he was a powerful preacher. One who knew him well testified: "Few men have been permitted to live an age in one community and go down to the grave with the universal testimony that their lives were of unimpeachable purity. Yet this was the lot of Benjamin Northcutt." Side by side, at Cane Ridge, at Indian Creek, at Sugar Ridge, and in other portions of Kentucky, he labored with Ray, and Page, and the foremost, in the great revival that closed the last and opened the present century. He died of cancer, in 1854, declaring that his unwavering confidence in his Redeemer was astonishing, even to himself—that death was no terror to him.\*

Ray, also, was found and saved by the gospel in Kentucky. Not much of a preacher, he drew the bow at a venture and seldom failed to hit something. "When the Methodists visited his neighborhood he was one of the first converts, and forsaking his gay and trifling companions, turned his feet to the house of God. Impressed with the conviction that he ought to preach, he offered himself to the Conference. His first and second years were spent on the Limestone Circuit, in Kentucky; his third on Green Circuit, in East Tennessee; and the three following years in Virginia. From the year 1797 to 1800, inclusive, he traveled extensively in North Carolina. Worn down, he located and rested, then returned to the work again."† He was a man of large stature, well-proportioned, erect, and commanding

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\*Jonathan Stamper's "Autumn Leaves," in *Home Circle*. †Ibid.

in appearance. He was celebrated for his capacity to command order, and tame the ruffians who sometimes infested camp-meetings. On one occasion he asked some young men to leave the seats appropriated to ladies. They did not obey; whereupon he left the stand, and was approaching them, when he overheard one of them say to his companion, "If he comes to me, I'll knock him down." Ray very coolly replied, "You are too light, young man;" and taking him by the hand, led him quietly to his appropriate seat. He was noted for his opposition to slavery, and was rough in the manner in which he obtruded that subject upon people. He would seldom lodge at the house of a slaveholder, if he could avoid it. Often at his appointments, when invited home with a stranger, his interrogatory would be, "Have you any negroes?" In the Annual Conference, whenever a preacher was proposed for admission, every eye would be turned to Father Ray, expecting him to arise, as was his custom, and say, "Mr. President, has he any negroes.?"\* He left Kentucky after he superannuated, on account of his dislike to slavery, and removed to Indiana. In the sixty-ninth year of his age he passed away, at his residence near Greencastle, where he had lived since 1831, esteemed and beloved by all who knew him. "Hundreds are yet living," wrote a veteran, twenty years ago, "not only in Kentucky, but in Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri—who once knew him well, and can call up, with the freshness of yesterday, the swelling melody that rolled from his clear, musical voice, as he would lift it up in his favorite hymn:

'Our souls by love together knit,  
Cemented, mixed in one!'"†

A native of Fauquier county, Va., the venerable John Page died at his home in Tennessee, in 1859, ninety-three years old. He was in his twenty-sixth year when his name first appeared on the roll. All over Kentucky and Tennessee he bore the burden and heat of the day. On the border of South-western Virginia, in 1800, a letter from Bishop Asbury reached him, calling for his services three hundred miles away. He says: "When the letter was handed me, urging me to hasten to Cumberland with all speed, I had just finished my sermon. I took my dinner and started, and reached my destined place as soon as I could." Letters to him from Bishops Coke, Asbury, and Whatcoat show

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\* Rev. Jonathan Stamper's "Autumn Leaves," in *Home Circle*, 1860. † *Ibid.*

in how high esteem he was held by them. That of the first, dated 1803, is full and earnest:

I am glad to find that my old, venerable colleagues are able, by traveling separately, to preside at all the Annual Conferences. I frequently travel with them in spirit, and never forget them and my other American brethren any night whatever, while I am bowing my knees before the throne. O what a ravishing view the Lord sometimes favors me with of your immense continent, filled with inhabitants, and filled with sons of God! I feel myself more than ever drawn toward my American brethren by the cords of love. Let me hear from you by some merchant-ship, directing to me at the New Chapel, City Road, London—whence all letters are safely sent to me, if I be not there.\*

When John Page began to preach in Kentucky and Tennessee there were two districts, embracing nine circuits, 19 traveling preachers, and only 2,674 white and 201 colored members. At his death there were, in the same territory, five Annual Conferences, embracing forty-four districts, and four hundred and eighty-six stations, circuits, and missions; 689 traveling and 1,676 local preachers; and a white membership of 155,584, and 30,796 colored. He contributed greatly to this result.

James Haw, having done faithful and heroic service in Kentucky, was superseded on the district and sent to Cumberland Circuit in 1790. Here also he was very successful, and closed his itinerancy not so well as it deserved. Says a local chronicler: "It seemed at one time, after the arrival of the Methodist preachers in Cumberland, that all the people would embrace religion." The citizens of Sumner county made him a present of a section of land (640 acres), that he might fix his home among them. He embraced the views of O'Kelley, and by his influence and address evil-affected a few itinerants, and brought over to his views every local preacher but one in the county in which he had located; and considerable dissatisfaction obtained among the members in many of the societies.

In 1795 a young man in the fourth year of his ministry put in a timely appearance on the Cumberland Circuit. He did a great work in establishing and extending Episcopal Methodism in the West, for he had a fine courage and intellect and a consecrated spirit—William Burke. He requested Haw to meet him in public, and adjust the differences, if possible. They met, according to appointment. Burke did himself much honor: an almost ex-

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\*Published with a letter from himself, in the *South-western Christian Advocate* (Nashville), March 22, 1844.

piring cause was saved. In debate, before a large and deeply interested audience, Burke so refuted his objections on Church government as to leave Haw almost without a following. He held one sacramental meeting, and it is said that himself and wife were the only communicants. But few, if any, were either awakened or converted under his ministry after his defection; so entirely did the spirit engendered by schism destroy a once powerful ministry. An unpublished history gives a further glimpse of our old friend and of those times:

In the revival among the Presbyterians and Methodists about the year 1800, Haw joined the Presbyterians. At that time the Presbyterians were friendly with the Methodists; Methodists and Presbyterians preached and communed together; but when Haw joined the Presbyterians, as he had said many things disrespectful of Bishop Asbury and of the form of discipline, the existing union was likely to be broken. John Page and Thomas Wilkerson, stationed in Cumberland Circuit at that time, very unreservedly stated their objections to Mr. Haw, and that if he continued among them he must make such acknowledgments as would satisfy the Methodists; and if he did not, the union must be, in the nature of things, broken. The Presbyterians determined that Mr. Haw should make such public acknowledgment, that the existing union might not be interrupted.

The charges were: 1. For falsely representing Bishop Asbury as having a libidinous thirst for power. 2. For making attempts to disunite the Methodist Society in Cumberland. 3. In attempting to destroy the Methodist discipline—charges that Haw did not deny. But it was requested that he should make his acknowledgments publicly. Accordingly, on Sunday morning, at camp-meeting, before thousands, Mr. Haw made acknowledgments, full and satisfactory. He acknowledged that he had misrepresented Bishop Asbury and the Methodist discipline. After this Mr. Haw seemed to rise in the esteem of the people, and gain some influence as a preacher. He continued with the Presbyterians while he lived.\*

The Conference for the West was held in 1795 at Felix Earnest's, on Nollichucky. "Here six brethren from Kentucky met us," says the Bishop; and that was as near as he got to it. Bishop Asbury could not go, but sent help. John Buxton, Aquila Sugg, and Francis Acuff, were transferred to Kentucky, and reported for duty: historic names in Western Methodism.

Another name is introduced this year into the annals of Methodism in the West—Thomas Wilkerson, a native of Amelia county, Virginia. He had not the advantages of early religious training, as his parents were irreligious. When about thirteen years of age he was awakened, but by improper associations his good impressions were effaced. Though so young, he endeavored

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\* MS. of Rev. Learner Blackman; quoted in Redford's History.

to drink in the poison of infidelity, but found no relief. When eighteen years of age, his neighborhood was blessed with a gracious revival, and among the subjects of conversion were several of his associates. A determination to dissuade them from a religious life opened afresh the springs of conviction in his own heart, and renewed his purpose to seek religion. On the following Sunday he joined the Church, and before the next, in a remarkable manner, he received the witness of the Spirit to his adoption as a child of God. This is the beginning of the meek, brave, pure, holy life and ministry, spent mainly in the West, where his name is as ointment poured forth. Under the pastoral care of John Metcalf, then traveling the circuit in which he resided, he was kept in the exercise of "gifts and graces," and at the session of the Virginia Conference held in Manchester, 1792—the stormy session that witnessed McKendree's temporary cessation from the itinerancy—Thomas Wilkerson became a traveling preacher.

He filled circuits in Virginia and North Carolina for three years, and when Asbury called for volunteers, Wilkerson offered himself. His first appointment in Kentucky was the Hinkstone Circuit, including Bourbon county. The country through which he had to pass to reach his new field was sparsely settled, and the journey hazardous. He says: "We had to pack our provisions for man and horse for nearly two hundred miles." Being detained, his company had left him. Friendly settlers on the border of this mighty sea of woods described its perils and attempted to dissuade him from his purpose to pass through it alone. Tales of murder, of the tomahawk and scalping-knife, in the depths of the very forest through which he had to pass, were rehearsed to deter him. Into the lonesome, solemn forest he plunged. He rode on and on, musing upon the loneliness of man isolated from humanity, and the still greater loneliness of him who is isolated from God. Night came; he lay down and slept, and awoke to find "his kind Preserver near." As he pursued his way a chilling consciousness of his solitary, helpless condition seized him. He apprehended danger near. Old tales of blood and torture recurred to his mind. He looked behind, before, and on either side. A moving object coming toward him startled him. He saw it was a human being; he felt it to be a savage. Turning as quietly as possible

to one side, among the bushes, he awaited the event with throbbing heart. The footfalls sounded nearer and nearer; a swarthy, fierce-looking man stepped full in view and, himself startled, grasped convulsively his rifle, but soon relaxed his grasp, and joyously greeted the affrighted preacher. Wilkerson found the stranger to be a way-worn, famished soldier from Wayne's army, on his return home. He shared with him his dried beef and home-made tree-sugar, the remnant of his scanty provisions. After checking their hunger and passing a few minutes in conversation, they knelt down and commended themselves to God, and parted, each to pursue his journey alone. Not far beyond, in a ravine whose depths the sun hardly penetrated, so walled in was it by cliffs and overarching trees, the sight of two white-ribbed skeletons, whose skulls showed the marks of the weapons used, deepened the traveler's sense of loneliness and danger, and caused a lifting up of his heart to God that brought him most sensible comfort while he pursued the path of duty.

His second appointment in the West was the Lexington Circuit; the next year, the Cumberland; in 1798, the Holston Circuit, with Tobias Gibson. Holston, with the exception of a few wide sweeps beyond, became the scene of his labors. Feeble in frame, more than once he had to retire and rest; then we meet him again on the high places of the field, till he falls into the superannuated list. In 1801 he attempted to return East, but was met by Bishop Asbury at the Western Conference, and sent again to Cumberland, where he remained two years—the circuit taking, for the first time, the name of “Nashville.” His appointments for several years threw him in the midst of the great revival which was permeating Middle Tennessee and Kentucky, and in which he bore a prominent part. The labors he performed and the exposures he underwent were too much for his constitution, previously impaired. At the Conference of 1803, when Bishop Asbury met him he said, “You look very slim;” and offered him any appointment he might choose. Acting upon the principle that the preacher who chooses his own field of ministerial labor chooses at the same time any difficulties that may ensue, he declined the proffered kindness. The church in Lexington had petitioned to be separated from the circuit. “Lexington Town,” the first station in the West, was announced, with Thomas Wilkerson as its pastor.



His excellent sense and fervent piety largely overcame the want of early advantages not only in education but in that which is still more difficult of later acquirement—social manners. This was often the subject of remark among those who knew him. It was difficult to account for the courtly smoothness and urbanity of the man, who had been born in humble life and trained in the wilderness. “In dress,” says one who knew him well, “he was scrupulously neat and plain, always wearing a gray-mixed homespun suit, cut according to the primitive Methodistic style. He could never be induced to assume the clerical black. He was met one day on the streets of Nashville by a young preacher, sleek in his raven broadcloth, who accosted him with: ‘Well, Brother Wilkerson, why do you not wear black? It gives dignity to the appearance of a minister, and is so apt to insure him respect, I think every minister should wear it.’ Wilkerson, who by inheritance or marriage was well to do, and could have afforded the finest, replied: ‘I have reasons, my brother, why I do not wear black. First, we are told that our message is glad tidings, good news; and such being the case, it seems to me that for the heralds of such a message to go clad in mourning is wholly inappropriate. In the next place, I was taken up by God from the humbler rank in life, and if the dispensation of the gospel committed to me is to be delivered to any particular class, it is to the poor. It is with them I hope to be useful; and I wish by all proper means to commend myself to them. Hence I dress so as to make myself easy of approach, and wish by this means to make them feel that I am their equal, their brother, their friend, and not elevated so far above them as to have no sympathy with them.’”

He was a delegate to the General Conference of 1828, which met at Pittsburg. When he came forward to have his quarters assigned him the committee looked at him, then looked at each other, and turned aside to deliberate; all of which resulted in sending Wilkerson away off across the river, perhaps to the village of Alleghany. He made no remonstrance. When the committee on public worship informed him that he was appointed to preach at a certain time and place, he told them No; he was out of the corporation—beyond their jurisdiction. A second time they came, and fortified their authority by saying that Bishop George said he *must* preach. (Probably the Bishop

had suggested his appointment.) He told them if the Bishop said so he was under his jurisdiction, and would comply. The Sunday evening hour saw a large congregation and a gracious surprise. The backwoodsman preached mightily and tenderly. Mourners were invited to the altar for prayer. Numbers came. A time of refreshing appeared, and sinners were happily converted. Wilkerson's star was in the ascendant; and now came what he disliked more than all the ill treatment his homespun had brought upon him. The preachers, very charitably, determined to make up a purse and buy him a suit of clothes. As they were speaking of it in the presence of good Bishop George, who knew Wilkerson at home, a mischievous twinkle played in the corner of the old Bishop's eye. "Why, brethren," said he, "if you were blacked he could buy half of you."

"His was a piety," continues one who grew up under the influence of his gracious life, "that begat meekness, gentleness, temperance, patience, long-suffering, brotherly kindness, charity; a piety that lived and breathed in all his words and acts; a piety that made him a most estimable citizen, a kind neighbor, a just and tender master, a devoted husband; a piety conspicuous in the pulpit, in the social circle, around the fireside; a piety that maintained his spirits in cheerfulness and hope through the vicissitudes and reverses of a long life."\*

He died at his residence, near Abingdon, Virginia, 1856, in the eighty-fourth year of his age. On his bed of death, a few weeks before he passed away, he said: "This old, worn-out frame I shall willingly consign to the grave. The grave cannot hurt it. Storms may rage, the revolutions of the earth may go on, but my body shall be at rest. God has use for it, and he will take care of it till the judgment. My soul is his. He gave it; to him, blessed be his name! it will return." He was fearful of grieving the Spirit by being too anxious to depart, for he was weary of life's long labors. He said: "The grave is a quiet resting-place; death is a pleasant sleep." The last connected words he uttered were: "If I had my time to go over I would preach differently to what I have. I would preach more about eternity. I would strive to keep eternity always before the minds of my people. What is time but a vapor? Eternity is all!"

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\* Rev. George E. Naff, in *Home Circle*, Vol. II.; and General Minutes M. E. Church, South.

"In the year 1798," says John Kobler, "I was sent by Bishop Asbury, as a missionary, to form a new circuit in what was then called the North-western Territory." A native of Culpepper, Virginia, after good service at home he was, in his thirtieth year, appointed presiding elder of Kentucky District, succeeding (in 1797) the noble Poythress, who for ten years had held the post of honor and danger. One year's work on this district made Kobler acquainted with frontier life, and he was the first missionary to cross the Ohio River.

Francis McCormack, a local preacher from Western Maryland, who immigrated to Kentucky in 1795 and settled in Bourbon county, had preceded Kobler to the North-western Territory, and settled "on the Little Miami, near where Milford now stands." Up to the time of the entrance of Kobler on this missionary field, "no sound of the everlasting gospel had as yet broken upon their ears; no house of worship was erected wherein Jehovah's name was recorded; no joining the assembly of the saints, or those who keep the holy day; but the whole might, with strict propriety, be called the land of darkness and the shadow of death."\* He "spread the first table for the sacrament of the Lord's Supper that was spread north-west of the Ohio," when only "twenty-five or thirty—the sum total of all that were in the country—communed." At the ensuing Conference Kobler reported the Miami Circuit with ninety-eight white members and one colored. Henry Smith was his successor.

While a presiding elder in Kentucky, Kobler visited a village where no Methodist minister had ever preached. Through the efforts of a few influential citizens, the use of the court-house was obtained, and he was invited to preach. "All the respectable citizens attended, and listened to his sermon with profound attention." When the public services were over, the people insisted that he was wrongly named—that he was no cobbler, but a complete workman.

Soon after Kobler appeared in his new field his hands were strengthened by the arrival of Philip Gatch with a goodly company, who had left Virginia in October, for the Miami region. Here was another preacher's home in the wilderness, and another preacher and preaching-place. They had known and loved each

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\* Finley's Sketches of Western Methodism

other in the East. The temptation, if not the necessity, of taking a hand in civil life in the formative stage of society and government, gave Gatch's future an unexpected turn:

He was made a magistrate, was a delegate to the convention which formed the constitution of the State, and was appointed by the Legislature an associate judge. He became a most influential citizen, a patriarch of the commonwealth as well as of the Church. Asbury, Whatecoat, and McKendree, were often his guests; and his old Eastern fellow-laborers—Watters, Dromgoole, and others—cheered him with letters. For twenty-two years his position on the bench of the court of common pleas reflected honor on the public justice. His friend and fellow-preacher, Judge Scott, who, as we have seen, attained the honor of the supreme court, says he was "regarded as a man of inestimable worth." His connection with the early history of the Church rendered his old age venerable, and the Ohio Conference placed his name among its superannuated preachers, that he might die with it on their record.\*

Kobler's last days were passed in Fredericksburg, Virginia. The General Minutes say: "The saint-like spirit, the Christian conversation, the dignified and ministerial bearing, and the untiring labors of John Kobler in preaching, exhorting, praying, and visiting the sick, have done more, under God, to give permanency to Methodism in Fredericksburg than any other instrumentality ever employed." Among his last active labors was a tour to the West, in his seventy-fourth year, visiting old circuits, and gathering from the rich and prosperous field one thousand dollars to build a new church in Fredericksburg. He landed at Cincinnati from aboard a steam-boat, where forty years before he had left a few settlers in cabins around a fort, then under the command of General Harrison—the great place of rendezvous for the troops which were sent by the government to guard the frontiers against the Indians. When he spread the first table for the sacrament of the Lord's Supper that was seen in the North-west, the communicants did not exceed twenty-five or thirty—the sum total of all that were in the country; now the Minutes of the Annual Conferences of Ohio returned one hundred thousand regular Church-members; so mightily had the word of God run and prevailed! Where once he preached in log-cabins, he now saw "stately churches, whose spires point toward heaven, and whose solemn bells announce the Christian Sabbath and call the attention of the multitude to the house of God." He visited the homes of his old friends of the Miami Circuit. "Taking my

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\*Stevens's History of the M. E. Church.

hand," writes a son of Gatch, "he held it for some time in silence, looking me in the face with a most impressive expression of countenance, which produced in me a sensation that I shall not attempt to describe. At length, in the most emphatic manner, he said: 'Your father was a great man in his day. He fought many hard battles for the Church. May you be a worthy son of so worthy a father!' He visited the graves of my parents, took off his hat, and stood some minutes as if absorbed in deep thought; fell upon his knees for some time, arose bathed in tears, and walked out of the grave-yard in silence."

At the Kentucky Conference of 1794 appeared Thomas Scott, transferred from the Baltimore Conference. He was born in Western Maryland, 1772. In the fourteenth year of his age he was converted; at seventeen he was received on trial into the Conference. He traveled circuits in Virginia and Maryland, and in 1793 he traveled the Ohio Circuit, a field of labor of great extent, stretching along the frontier settlements on the Ohio River in Western Pennsylvania and Virginia. In the spring of 1794, embarking at Wheeling, he descended the Ohio River on a flat-boat laden with provisions for Wayne's army. This was his best route to join the Kentucky itinerancy. After doing good work on the Danville and Lexington circuits he located, and turned his attention to the study of law. While prosecuting his legal studies, in order to support his family he worked at the tailoring business—some idea of which he had gathered in early life from his father, who was a tailor. Anxious to render him every assistance, his wife spent her leisure time in reading to her husband Blackstone's Commentaries and other law-books, while he plied his needle upon the board. In 1800 he obtained license to practice law, and in 1801 emigrated to Ohio, and settled in Chillicothe. There was force in Thomas Scott's character, as well as in his constitution. He outlived nearly all his contemporaries, and his sketches afford the best history of a good many men and things in his times. His first years in the itinerancy were spent as junior preacher under Valentine Cook, and Daniel Hitt, and Thomas Lyell—men whose contact had an educating power. While on Berkeley Circuit, in Virginia, he preached at Charlestown—a place where mobs had molested Methodist meetings. He preached in a grove, and requested all who wished to join the Church to meet him at his lodging at a given hour. He says:

Before the hour had arrived Dr. Edward Tiffin came into the room where I was sitting, and commenced a conversation with me. Being a stranger to me, and not knowing but that he had been one of those who had favored the mobs, I conversed with him cautiously. He however remained, and several others soon collected. After singing, prayer, and an exhortation, I gave an invitation to those who wished to become members to come forward and announce their names. The doctor was standing on the opposite side of the room fronting me. I had not perceived that he was affected; but the moment I gave the invitation he quickly stepped forward, evidently under deep and pungent conviction, roaring almost with anguish, and asked for admission into the Church. He was admitted, and before I had completed that round on the circuit he had preached several sermons. Immediately after I had received Dr. Tiffin into the Church he became convinced of his call to the ministry. Conferring not with flesh and blood, and without waiting for a license, he forthwith commenced preaching.

Tiffin had a family, and could not therefore enter the itinerancy in those times. In stature he was about five feet six inches, robust, with a capacious head, a round, florid face, and expressive features; in conversation vivid and intelligent; in the pulpit systematic and energetic. He removed to Ohio Territory, and when Scott reached Chillicothe, he found Tiffin, his convert of ten years before, there ready to receive him, a commanding citizen, preaching the gospel in the surrounding country, organizing societies, dealing out medicines with liberality to the poor, successfully performing difficult cases of surgery, and sheltering the pioneer Methodists. Tiffin became the chief citizen of Ohio; was elected a member of the convention which formed its State constitution, and soon after elected its first governor, "without opposition." He served a second term, and was afterward chosen senator in Congress, and held other places of trust. "He was an honor to his denomination, and his influence for it was one of its greatest early advantages in the West."

When Tiffin was elected governor, Scott succeeded him in the clerkship of several courts, and at the first township election of Chillicothe, under the constitution, he was elected a justice of the peace, the first one commissioned under the State organization. He was also elected secretary of the first State Senate, an office which he held several years, till he was appointed by the Legislature a judge of the supreme court, whose chief-justice he became one year later. In these prominent civil places he acquitted himself with honor, for his native capacity was much above mediocrity, and his diligent application, both to study and labor, rendered him master of his position. His official rank secured him public influence, and this he, like his friend Tiffin, consecrated to religion. They were two of the strongest pillars of Methodism in Ohio, and to their public character and labors it owes much of its rapid growth and predominant sway in that magnificent State. Had Scott been able, after his marriage, to remain in the itinerant minis-

try, he would probably have attained, as his friends predicted, its highest office and dignity; but it may be doubted whether he or Tiffin could, even as its chief bishop, have served their denomination or their generation more effectively than they did in their long and honorable lives as local preachers and public citizens. Ohio reveres the memory of her Methodist first governor and first chief-justice, and has given the name of the former to two of her towns.\*

We take leave for awhile of Kentucky and Tennessee, the scene of the great Western campaign—the gate-way to the North-west, the transmontane distributing-point of ministerial supplies; but it is with a feeling of regret that the heroes whose self-denying and mighty achievements laid not only the foundation of Methodism, but of a moral empire, can have such inadequate notice. They will live forever. Their record is on high. In the limits of this sketch, and at this distance of time, we must fail of doing reverence to a host of worthies, even by the mention of their names. Wm. Burke, Lewis Garrett, Moses Speer, Jacob Lurton, Stephen Brooks, Henry Smith, James Ward, Richard Bird, Benjamin Lakin, John Watson, Jeremiah Lawson, and their brethren, wrought on God's temple, holding the sword in one hand while the trowel was wielded by the other.

But the work is under way; the land is surveyed and mapped out; log meeting-houses are rising up; every fort and station has been preached to; the roads, if not macadamized, have been "blazed;" preachers, exhorters, class-leaders, and a body of working laymen, begin to come forward from among the converts; and the living forces of a gospel Church are all at work. Methodism is established, and ready to receive and to assimilate immigrants as they come. There are, at the close of 1799, in Tennessee, 530 white and 51 colored members; in Kentucky, 1672 white and 64 colored members; and the Miami Circuit, in the North-west Territory, has 98 members, and next year the Scioto will be added. All these are distributed into ten circuits, and served by twelve itinerants, and a number of local preachers.

Looking to the South-west, we see that vast domain opened or opening by late national treaties, and its occupancy is this year begun. Tobias Gibson, of the South Carolina Conference, having filled several appointments within the limits of his own Conference, was impressed with a strong desire to visit Natchez. He offered himself to Bishop Asbury as a missionary, and was

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\*Stevens's History of the M. E. Church.

sent to plant the banner of salvation on the lower Mississippi, in 1799, eighteen years before the Mississippi territory was admitted into the Union. He set out from Pedee—his native spot—and bent his course toward the Cumberland River. For six hundred miles he traveled through the wilderness. Arriving at the river, he sold his horse, bought a canoe, and embarked for twelve hundred miles, with saddle, bridle, and saddle-bags, and a supply of provisions. Paddling himself down the Cumberland, he dropped into the Ohio, and soon after reached the Mississippi. “God speed thee, brave-hearted boatman! Thy frail bark carries the gospel to the frontier outpost of civilized life.” He continued his solitary course down the great river until he reached Natchez. Here he founded a Methodist Church. He subsequently made four land journeys through the wilderness lying between Natchez and the Cumberland, to procure additional laborers. In the Minutes of 1800 sixty members were reported as the result of his first year’s work. We shall see Methodism from this center working its way eastward until it meets the coming tide in the Tombigbee Valley, and southward to New Orleans, and westward into Opelousas, Attakapas, and the Red River regions of Louisiana.



## CHAPTER XXXII.

Annual Conferences—Boundaries and Powers Established—Locations—Chartered Fund—Proposal to Strengthen the Episcopacy Fails—Asbury's Health Gives Way—Helpers—Whatcoat Consecrated Bishop—McKendree in the West.

THE number of the yearly Conferences and their size were found to be inconvenient. The most of them were too small to exert the moral and disciplinary power that inheres in large and well-ordered bodies. They lacked the presence of mature and guiding minds, and presented not enough variety of talent and adaptation in the ministry to meet the demands of the work. This was remedied by the General Conference of 1796, which divided the whole Connection into six Conferences, independent of each other, with defined boundaries and limited powers; with provision for a seventh in the province of Maine, "if the Bishops see it necessary." These six original Conferences were: New England, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Virginia, South Carolina, and the Western Conference. Before this regulation the Bishop had the power of appointing the number of Conferences at his own discretion, which doubtless caused much pressure to be brought to bear on him for local accommodation. This and that neighborhood wanted a Conference, and the preachers wished to be excused from distant journeys. Two years before, fourteen Conferences had been held occupying eleven months. One of them began and closed the same day. This year an account of the number of the members in each State separately was taken.\*

The summing up of statistics for 1796 showed thirty preachers admitted on trial, and forty lost out of the traveling ministry—twenty-eight by location and nine by death. The next year forty recruits joined the itinerant ranks and forty-three located. This tendency was alarming. The ranks of the ministry were weakened even more than these figures indicated, for ministers of experience and well-developed power were giving place to mere be-

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\* Province of Maine, 357; New Hampshire, 68; Connecticut, 1,050; New York, 4,044; New Jersey, 2,351; Pennsylvania, 3,011; Delaware, 2,228; Maryland, 12,416; Virginia, 13,779; Massachusetts, 824; Rhode Island, 220; North Carolina, 8,713; South Carolina, 3,659; Georgia, 1,174; Tennessee, 546; Kentucky, 1,750; Upper Canada, 474. Total 56,664.

ginners. There was a limit to endurance, even for single men, and for those with families to continue going became impossible in the present time, to say nothing of the lack of any provision in the future. They asked only to be supported—barely to subsist—while at work; not to lay up any thing. Below the bare subsistence-point in the itinerancy was—location.\* Something must be done, and at this General Conference the preachers' salaries being kept at the old mark (\$64), a supplemental scheme was devised to help those who failed to get that, and others whose necessities required more. This scheme was known as the "Chartered Fund." It was domiciled in Philadelphia, and nine trustees chosen. The main provisions may be seen:

Question: What further provision shall be made for the distressed traveling preachers, for the families of traveling preachers, and for superannuated and worn-out preachers, and the widows and orphans of preachers?

Answer: There shall be a chartered fund, to be supported by the voluntary contributions of our friends, the principal stock of which shall be funded under the direction of trustees, and the interest applied under the direction of the General Conference, according to the following regulations, viz.:

1. That no sum exceeding sixty-four dollars shall in any one year be applied to the use of an itinerant, superannuated, or worn-out *single* preacher.
2. That no sum exceeding one hundred and twenty-eight dollars in any one year shall be applied to the use of any itinerant, superannuated, or worn-out *married* preacher.
3. That no sum exceeding sixty-four dollars in any one year shall be applied for the use of each widow of an itinerant, superannuated, or worn-out preacher.
4. That no sum exceeding sixteen dollars shall be applied in any one year for the use of each child or orphan of an itinerant, superannuated, or worn-out preacher.

The interest was annually divided among the Conferences, to be used under these provisions; and in addition to gifts and legacies from friends, it was provided that "the produce of the sale of our books, after the book debts are paid and a sufficient capital is provided for carrying on the business, shall be regularly paid into the Chartered Fund."

In the plea issued by the General Conference in behalf of this fund, while a just claim is forcibly presented upon true grounds,

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\* Wm. Burke's case was not a solitary one. In 1794 we find him on Salt River Circuit, Kentucky. It was nearly five hundred miles in extent, comprising five counties, to be traveled every four weeks, with continual preaching. The sorely tried itinerant writes: "I was reduced to the last pinch. My clothes were nearly all gone. I had patch upon patch, and patch by patch, and I received only money sufficient to buy a waistcoat, and not enough to pay for making it."

we get a glimpse of a few bunches of those sour grapes which the fathers ate, and in consequence the children's teeth were set on edge. There was no Missionary Board, as yet:

Our brethren who have labored on the mountains, on the Western waters, and in the poorer circuits in general, have suffered unspeakable hardships, merely from the want of some established fund, in which the competent members of our Society might safely lodge what their benevolent hearts would rejoice to give for the spread of the gospel. On the same account many of our worn-out preachers, some of whom quickly consume their strength by their great exertions for the salvation of souls, have been brought into deep distress; and the widows and orphans of our preachers have been sometimes reduced to extreme necessity who might have lived in comfort if the preachers who were the husbands on the one hand, and the fathers on the other, had not loved their Redeemer better than wife or children, or life itself. And it is to be lamented—if possible, with tears of blood—that we have lost scores of our most able married ministers—men who were obliged to retire from the general work because they saw nothing before them for their wives and children—if they continued itinerants—but misery and ruin. But the present institution will, we trust, under the blessing of God, greatly relieve us in, if not entirely deliver us from, these mighty evils. For we have full confidence that the hearts of our friends will be enlarged, and their hands stretched forth on this important occasion, and a provision will be made sufficient to preserve such objects of charity from want, which is all that is aimed at or desired.

“Many of our friends,” says a contemporary historian, “willingly subscribed to this valuable institution, and several thousand dollars were collected in a short time.” Some valuable legacies were also left by will to the trustees of this fund.

The endowment that supports a class of ministerial beneficiaries, retired and likely to be lost sight of and therefore neglected, may be wise in its principle and good in its operations; but the principle of endowing a living and working ministry has been justly objected to. To this extent some have alleged that the Chartered Fund was a virtual repudiation of the doctrine of inspiration—“They that preach the gospel must live of the gospel.” If successful, it would have made the ministry independent of the people, and great evils would come of this; if unsuccessful, the persons whom it proposes to benefit are damaged by being cut off from direct reliance upon the living Church. The opinion of one who observed its workings closely is thus given:

Though the creation of the Chartered Fund originated from the purest motives, and has been kept up and superintended by some of the most benevolent spirits of the Church, yet it has never been able to pay more than from ninety to one hundred dollars a year to each Annual Conference; and as this small amount would not, when divided among the several claimants, give to each but about two

dollars a year, it may be questioned whether, by inducing a false dependence in the public mind, this fund has not defeated the objects of its institution, and disappointed the expectations of its benevolent founders and patrons.\*

The Church moved up slowly at this point, having much to overcome in the way of her own teaching and habits. Four years later (1800), the preacher's salary was raised to eighty dollars a year, and the parsonage plan was inaugurated, providing a dwelling free of rent and supplied with heavy furniture. In the first thirty years after the organization of Episcopal Methodism sixteen hundred and sixteen itinerant preachers had united with the different Conferences. Two years later—that is, by the General Conference of 1816—seven hundred and sixty-four had located, one hundred and sixteen had died in the work, thirty-one had been expelled, nineteen had withdrawn, and six hundred and eighty-six still remained in the pastorate.† These figures show that during a period about the average of human life, immediately following the organization of the Church, only seven per cent. of her itinerant ministry died in the active service, while forty-seven per cent. had located. The locations exceeded, by seventy-eight, the whole number of itinerants then retaining membership in the Conferences—the accumulation of all these years. This loss from the pastorate of men who had completed their probation—*tested* men—shows an immense strain on the system. Depriving the Church of the benefit of practiced wisdom and ability in the pastoral relation was the first but not the only calamity. So many preachers of recognized, justly earned influence being thrown into the local ranks disturbed the equilibrium of ecclesiastical government which, by reason and Scripture, must always be largely devolved upon the pastorate; and thus was laid the foundation of revolutionary measures that in time came to the surface, with great disquiet and hurt.

A Deed of Settlement, securing and protecting Church property, in nearly the language of the present form, was the enactment of this General Conference; a timely measure, for as yet no great investment had been made in this direction.

At this session it was agreed that local preachers might be ordained deacons; and arrangements were also made for the trial of local preachers, with privilege of appeal.

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\* Bangs's History of the M. E. Church, Vol. II. † See alphabetical list in Bangs's History.

The General Conference of 1796 met in Baltimore, on the 20th of October, with one hundred and twenty traveling preachers. An evidence of brevity and dispatch is furnished by one of them: "After we had finished the business of the Conference, we had the Minutes published before the preachers left town, that they might take them to their several circuits." Bishop Coke, who had been absent nearly four years, was present, and brought with him a letter of fraternal greeting from the British Conference. Hitherto Asbury, with little assistance from his colleague, had borne the whole burden of episcopal duty. He had been for some time desirous of dividing this burden; and now the magnitude of the work, the frequent and long European visits of Coke, and his own failing health, made it necessary that some one be appointed to "this office and ministry." A resolution to strengthen the episcopacy was introduced, and pending its discussion Asbury rose and stated to the Conference the fears that agitated his mind, and the reasons for them. He feared an imprudent selection, and expressed the hope that the choice might fall on some one well established in the doctrines and discipline of Methodism. "This threw a damper on all present, and seemed to paralyze the whole business." The resolution was then modified so as to read thus: "To strengthen the episcopacy in a way which should be agreeable to Mr. Asbury." "It was then almost unanimously agreed to, and requested of Mr. Asbury to make the selection himself, which he appeared very backward and unwilling to do." At this juncture of the affair a new difficulty was started. Coke, who was present, and occupied the chair, requested the suspension of action upon the subject until the afternoon session. When the body assembled again, "Dr. Coke offered himself wholly to the Conference, promising to serve them in the best manner he could, and to be entirely at the disposal of his American brethren, and to live or die among them."\* He retired, and after two days' warm debate his offer was accepted, and the resolution before agreed to "was dropped." No doubt Coke was sincere in the offer

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\* Life and Times of Jesse Lee, by L. M. Lee, D.D., with an original letter from Rev. John Kobler (1843), who sat with Lee in three General Conferences. Jesse Lee opposed the acceptance of Coke's offer: "I still say, No more English bishops. I had rather lose one than make one. I wish for an American Superintendent equal in power with Brother Asbury." See pages 370-380.

made, but he had many things on hand, and in a few months was on the ocean, in response to calls from the West Indies, and Ireland, and England.

Bishop Asbury's health failed during the next year, and on his route to the New England Conference he was obliged to lie by. Never of strong constitution, naturally subject to melancholy and dejection, his travels have been a triumph of mind over matter; a strong will and a burning zeal have borne him along. With legs and feet swollen, and his chest blistered, he has been accomplishing journeys, been presiding and preaching, at a rate both wonderful and painful to the reader who keeps acquainted with his diary. Now he stops, and yet does not stop; for through a score of years he will, to use his own expression, go "hobbling" through the United States and Territories. During the summer of 1797 he abandoned the hope of being able to meet his engagements at the extremes of the Union. Under these circumstances he wrote to Jesse Lee requesting him to hold himself in readiness to leave his district, and go with him from the approaching New England Conference to Charleston and the more southern portions of the work. A later letter bears date September 12th, appointing Lee president:

My Very Dear Brother: I am convinced that I ought not to attempt to come to the Conference at Wilbraham. Riding thirteen miles yesterday threw me into more fever than I have had for a week past. It will be with difficulty I shall get back. The burden lieth on thee; act with a wise and tender hand, especially on the stations. I hope it will force the Connection to do something, and turn their attention for one to assist or substitute me. I cannot express the distress I have had in all my afflictions, for the state of the Connection. We say the Lord will provide. True; but we must look out for men and means. Your brethren in Virginia wish you to come forth. I think the most general and impartial election may take place in the Yearly Conferences; every one may vote; and in General Conference, perhaps one-fifth or one-sixth part would be absent. I wish you to come and keep as close to me and my directions as you can. I wish you to go, after the Conference, to Georgia, Holston, and to Kentucky; and perhaps come to Baltimore in June, if the ordination should take place, and so come on to the Eastern Conference. You will have to follow my advice for your health, steel as you are.

The reference to *ordination* has this explanation: Bishop Asbury had proposed the election of Richard Whatcoat, Francis Poythress, and Jesse Lee, as assistant bishops in the United States. Ten years before, when Wesley nominated Whatcoat and Garrettson for the same office, the quadrennial General Con-

ference had not been instituted and in the absence of this federal organ the three Yearly Conferences, then held, acted on the proposition separately. It passed the first, was halted at the second, and was rejected at the third. Coke did his best to take it through, but failed. Indeed, the last Conference (Baltimore), which by numbers and position so preponderated as to be controlling, took him sharply to account for having, while out of the country and without consulting Asbury, called a Conference to meet in Baltimore some months in advance of the regular session of the Yearly Conference, and to act as a General Conference. Coke apologized for his conduct, and entered into a written agreement never to exercise any episcopal authority for American Methodism when out of America; and even then to be more considerate of coördinate powers than he had been. As this was not his first, so it was not his last blunder, as we shall see.

The proposal of Asbury for the Yearly Conferences to begin voting on nominations for his colleagues, made by himself, was extraordinary. The New England Conference and President did well to give it a quietus: it seems not to have traveled farther. True, the exigency was pressing, but the plan for meeting it was bad and the precedent worse. The worthy and worn-out Bishop had discerned the men on whom were the eyes of the people; and he felt the wants of the Church as no other man could; but he was "overseen" in his method of supply. His parental solicitude made him oblivious of the practice and principle involved when the three names should be going through successive Conferences, with his weighty indorsement, while the voters, in the absence of any opportunity of canvassing other names, were shut up to the trio. His one action involved three that come before a General Conference for consideration, and are considered of some importance: Shall the episcopacy be strengthened? "Yes," says the Bishop. How many? "Three," is the response. Whom shall we have? The same great and guileless man, knowing all the preachers by name and character, feeling as a father toward his children, settles the question—"Whatcoat, Poythress, and Lee." That he meant well and nominated wisely in this, none could doubt. If not an abusive procedure, it was liable to abuse. The parental rather than the constitutional method grew up out of his relation to the people and preachers—they were his spiritual children. It was this, or such as this, that helped to antag-

onize the destructive O'Kelley, who, after being committed to the opposition, went farther than he intended—too far to turn back. It would be alike unphilosophical and unhistorical to suppose that there was no occasion or cause whatever for that fierce faction. These abortive measures of administration, though they make no figure in current history, may enable us in part to account for a schism which never can be justified.\*

Leaving Wilbraham, Lee repaired to New Rochelle, where he found the Bishop, somewhat improved in health, though yet suffering. In a few days they commenced their journey to the South, to hold the Conferences. Passing through Virginia they met Coke, who was supposed to be in Europe. He had just landed, bringing an address from the British to the American Conference, containing a request to cancel his engagements to continue among them, and to suffer him to return to England to devote himself to the Church in his native land. The Virginia Conference, to which this was presented, declined acting on a paper and a pledge of which the General Conference only could take cognizance, but drew up a letter, which Asbury signed. After stating the sole and exclusive right of the General Conference in the premises, it affirms: "No Yearly Conference, no official character, dare assume to answer for that grand federal body. By the advice of the Yearly Conference now sitting in Virginia, and the respect I bear to you, I write to inform you that in our own persons and order we consent to his return, and *partial* continuance with you; and earnestly pray that you may have much peace, union, and happiness together."

This Conference counseled the Bishop to cease traveling, at least until the spring, and requested Lee to proceed South and supply his place. This he did. He filled twenty-five appointments for preaching in thirty days and five hundred miles, and reached Charleston on the 1st of January, 1798. It was nearly thirteen years since he had visited the city, in company with

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\*It was well, for more reasons than one, that this proposal miscarried. Poythress was far away in the West; and the accurate and thoughtful McHenry had at this period detected the decay not only of his body, but of his mind. Poythress was relieved of the Kentucky District next year, and began to pass under the cloud. In 1818 he died, in Jessamine county, twelve miles from Lexington, at the house of his sister, Mrs. Susanna Pryor, with whom he had lived, in a state of derangement, for several years. (Letter of B. McHenry to Lewis Garrett 1823—in *Recollections of the West*.)



Bishop Asbury and Henry Willis, for the purpose of establishing regular Methodist worship in the place. On that occasion Lee preached the first sermon. A gentleman named Wells received them into his house, and was converted, and his family became the warm friends and steady adherents of the Church. But now he was not—God had taken him. Bishops Coke and Asbury happened fitly to be in Charleston when this first trophy of Methodism was gathered home to his rest in heaven, and they were privileged to pay mournful tribute to the memory of this generous and noble-minded servant of Christ. Lee could only go to the grave and weep there. There were now two neat houses of worship and a flourishing company of believers to welcome him and wait on his ministry. The South Carolina Conference commenced on the 2d of January. The Minutes report the members in Society in the city at 77 whites and 421 colored; and in the State at 3,354 whites and 1,179 colored. An increase on the preceding year of 661 whites and 289 colored.

As the appointments of Bishop Asbury extended into Georgia, on the adjournment of Conference Lee visited Augusta, and went to the southern limits of the Union, preaching twenty-seven times in thirty days. Stith Mead did a great work here.

During the past year James King, the pastor in Charleston, had died—a young man “greatly esteemed”—and John Dickins, in Philadelphia; both of yellow fever. Since 1789 Dickins had been stationed there, superintending the Book Concern with economy and wisdom. Says the chronicler of the times: “He conducted the whole of his business with punctuality and integrity. He closed his life with uncommon joy and peace, and had a full assurance of eternal life. His death was more sensibly felt by the Methodist Connection in general than we had ever known or felt in the death of any other preacher that had died among us.”

The repeated presence of yellow fever in the Atlantic cities caused a change from fall to spring sessions of the Conferences, so as to begin in the South in the winter, and terminate in the extreme Eastern States in the summer.

Pursuing his route northward, Lee reached the seat of the Virginia Conference in time to preach its first sermon. Of the service he says: “We had a most powerful, weeping, shouting time; the house seemed to be filled with the presence of God; and I could truly say it was a time of love to my soul.” It was a

great joy to meet once more with Bishop Asbury, and to find him, though worn and wasted with affliction, harnessed for the conflict with sin, and going forth, as of yore, in the front of the battle. "Bishop Asbury exhorted for some time, and the people were much melted under the word." The Conference was held at Salem, in Mecklenburg county, in April, about four months from the one of the preceding year; this was done in order to fall in with the arrangement heretofore mentioned for holding the Conferences.

Having finished in New England the visitation of the Conferences for 1798, Bishop Asbury and his traveling companions repaired to the South, in order to resume their duties at the extremity of the work, as had been done in the preceding year. January 1, 1799, beginning at Charleston—where a month is spent, including a run into Georgia—they work their way up northward; not taking straight lines between preaching-points and Conferences. And this was done the next year also, with the addition of Nicholas Snethen to the company, who was called the "silver trumpet." The Bishop lamented, "My bow is weak, if not broken;" and yet he preached often, and oftener exhorted after his younger and more vigorous co-laborers had "sermonized." His appointments were out for months in advance, sometimes for a year; and they were well improved—if he could not preach himself, he had it done, and well done. As an illustration of the general interest excited by these visitations, the fact is stated by the Bishop that from three to six thousand souls congregated weekly at their appointments for preaching.

January 1, 1800, the Conference for the southern portion of the Church was again held in Charleston. "Twenty-three ministers were present. None had died during the year, none located, and seven were received into the ministry" as itinerants. The reports from the different circuits, including those in Georgia, show an encouraging state of religion. The tide has turned henceforth growth is reported from Georgia to Maine. There have been great searchings of heart over the late divisions; solemn days of fasting and prayer; patient waiting and faithful working; and the Lord sends now prosperity. We find this entry in the Bishop's journal, January 6th: "I desired Jesse Lee, as my assistant, to take my horse and his own, and visit, between this and the 7th of February, Coosawhatchie, Savannah, and St.

Mary's (a ride of about four hundred miles), and to take John Garven to his station. The time hath been when this journey would have been my delight, but now I must lounge in Charleston." In those days, when preachers lived in the saddle, it required but short notice for a long journey, and Lee accordingly entered upon the work prescribed the next morning. On the 18th he reached St. Mary's—the termination of his mission. Here he preached in the court-house to a large congregation of attentive hearers. From hence he hurried on, through mud, water, and swamps, preaching every day. He dryly remarks: "The country is very good for cattle, but at present it is a poor place for piety or morality. Persons who violate the laws of their country find it convenient to flee from justice either to the Indians on the West or the Spaniards on the South, and thus get beyond the laws of the United States. I heard of some people," he writes, "in the counties of Glenn and Camden, who were grown to man's estate, and some that had families, who never heard a sermon until last summer, when Brother George Clark first came among them, preaching repentance by Jesus Christ."

On his return trip Lee spent several days in Savannah, and improved the opportunity to visit Whitefield's Orphan-house, and with sad feelings contemplated the ruin. He returned to Charleston February 7th, the day appointed for his return by the Bishop, who on the occasion says: "Jesse Lee and George Dougherty came to town; the former hath been a route of about six hundred miles; and my poor gray hath suffered for it."\* Four days were given to rest, preaching, and pious visiting, when the Bishop and his party were again in the saddle, with their faces to the North. The weary Asbury rejoices once more to be on the road and in the country: "On my way I felt as if I was let out of prison. Hail! ye solitary pines! the jessamine, the red-bud, and dogwood, how charming in full bloom! the former a most fragrant smell." The reports all along the line were cheering. From the year 1795 there was an organized Society in every State, and there was now a gain of members in every one

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\*"After we had finished our business in Conference, four of the largest preachers amongst us went to a friend's store and were weighed. My weight was 250 lbs.; Seely Bunn's, 252; Thomas Lucas's, 245; and Thomas F. Sargeant's, 220; in all 976 lbs.; and all of us travel on horseback." (Jesse Lee's Journal.)

except Pennsylvania, and there a revival flame was kindling. The Church in Augusta, Georgia, is organized, and begins to build. In the course of the previous year, says a local historian, "our Society in the city of Richmond, Virginia, began to build a meeting-house in that place, and after some time they finished it; but their difficulties in paying for it were very great." On the frontiers the circle enlarges. Southward, Oconee and Milledgeville and St. Mary's are added; eastward, Nantucket, Merrimac, Cape Cod, Cape May, and Penobscot; northward, Niagara, Montreal, Otsego, Cayuga, and Chenango; and westward, we have seen the extreme positions of Miami and Natchez occupied; and Kanawha appears on the list of appointments at the end of the century.

Bishop Asbury, not always able to keep up with his appointments at the extreme limits of the Connection, ever and anon lies by at Dromgoole's, or Merritt's, or Gough's, or Bassett's—waiting at these middle stations to fall in with his helpers, according to his strength. We look in during the weeks of enforced rest, and find him writing letters—on an average a thousand a year—planning the work and bringing up his journal; while as one of the family he enters into domestic life by shelling peas with the good housewife, winding cotton, and teaching the children their lessons. He had no lack of homes, for the Master's promise was fulfilled—he had them "a hundred-fold;" but he had no abundance of money. He writes: "One of my friends wanted to borrow or beg £50 of me—he might as well have asked me for Peru. I showed him all the money I had in the world—about \$12—and gave him five. Strange that neither my friends nor my enemies will believe that I neither have nor seek bags of money.\*"

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\* His journal, at such a time, discloses his feelings as well as his afflictions: "It is now eight weeks since I have preached—awfully dumb Sabbaths! I have been most severely tried from various quarters; my fevers, my feet, and Satan, would set in with my gloomy and nervous affections. Sometimes subject to the greatest effeminacy; to distress at the thought of a useless, idle life; but what brought the heavy pang into my heart was the thought of leaving the Connection without some proper men of their own election, to go in and out before them in my place, and to keep that order which I have been seeking these many years to establish. Lord, help me! for I am poor and needy; the hand of God hath touched me, and I think Satan *forts* himself in my melancholy, unemployed, unsocial, and inactive hours." His feet, he complains, ache so that he fears they will mortify; yet, to use his own descriptive words, he "rubs along"—"hobbles about."

The fourth General Conference assembled in Baltimore, May 6, 1800. One hundred and nineteen preachers, as members of the body, were present, and the session continued until the 20th of the month. It was resolved that hereafter the General Conference should consist only of elders who had traveled four years, and the Annual Conferences were directed to send their journals to the General Conference for revision. The Bishops, who had previously been dependent upon private liberality or the benevolence of particular societies for their support, were now authorized to look to the Annual Conferences for their allowance, each Conference having to pay its proportion of the amount necessary to be raised. This Conference recommended the purchase of ground and the erection of parsonages in each circuit. The annual salary of itinerants was raised four dollars per quarter; that is, instead of sixty-four dollars it was eighty dollars; and the rule was abolished requiring the preachers "to give an account of all the private gifts they received, whether it were money, clothing, or any thing else, toward their support; and it was to go in part of their quarterage, or else it was to be applied to make up the deficiencies of the other preachers."

The venerable Henry Smith, who lived to be the oldest preacher of his day, was awakened under the second sermon preached by Thomas Scott (afterward Judge Scott) on the Berkley Circuit. He followed Kobler in Ohio, and blessed Kentucky and Tennessee with his ministry in the hardest times. Writing "Recollections" from "Pilgrim's Rest," Baltimore county, on the early events of our history, he says:

I traveled seven years under the rule that allowed a preacher sixty-four dollars a year, including all marriage fees and presents, from a cravat down to a pair of stockings. I think our bishops were under the same rule. The last time I saw this rule imposed was at the Baltimore Conference, held at the Stone Chapel, in May 1800. In my mind I yet see the sainted Wilson Lee hand over his fees and presents. The world never saw a more disinterested, cross-bearing, and self-sacrificing set of ministers than the early Methodist preachers. Nothing but a deep and abiding conviction of duty could induce them to volunteer in such a work. In those days the Methodists believed in a special call to the work of the ministry.

The number of Conferences was increased from six to seven by adding the New York. The bishops were allowed to admit colored preachers to deacon's orders under certain limitations and restrictions. This rule was never inserted in the Discipline. The first colored deacon ordained under it was Richard Allen.

of Philadelphia, who led the first secession of colored people from the Church, in 1816, and was elected the first bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Bishop Coke was present at the General Conference, with an earnest request from the Old Country that he might be allowed to return. To this the Conference assented, on the condition that he come back at the end of four years. The English, and especially the Irish, Conferences entreated for a continued share in his labors. "They saw in him," says their historian, "the spirit of missionary enterprise, combined with a perfect knowledge of the details of the work, together with a quenchless zeal, which was altogether marvelous. They clearly perceived that the Methodism of England needed such a man, and sought to reclaim him."

Bishop Asbury "thought of nothing else but the resignation of his office;" and it is said he went to this Conference with his valedictory address for the occasion written out. But the first intimation of such a step was checked by the Conference, and they adopted resolutions of a highly complimentary character, thanking him for his distinguished services, and earnestly asking him to continue them, as far as his health would permit. To this he consented, and the Conference resolved to elect and consecrate an additional bishop.

Prior to the election a discussion arose as to the powers of the new bishop, and whether he should be considered subordinate to Bishop Asbury, or his equal. Coke moved that the new bishop, in the absence of Asbury, should present the appointments to the Conference for their consideration and revision; but finding the motion distasteful to the preachers, asked leave to withdraw it. The Conference, after two days' discussion, stood by the original plan, and resolved that the new bishop should be a joint superintendent.

On the first ballot no one had a majority of votes; on the second there was a tie between Jesse Lee and Richard Whatcoat; on the third ballot Richard Whatcoat was elected by a majority of four votes. A looker-on, who subsequently became an active evangelist, gives us a particular account of the Sunday following:

Sunday, the 18th, was a great day in Baltimore, among the Methodists. The ordination sermon was preached by Rev. Thomas Coke, LL.D., in Light Street Church. Crowds at an early hour thronged the temple. The Doctor preached

from Rev. ii. 8: "And unto the angel of the Church in Smyrna write: These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive," etc. After the sermon, which was adapted to the occasion, Richard Whatcoat was ordained a bishop in the Church of God by the imposition of the hands of Dr. Coke and Bishop Asbury, assisted by several elders. Never were holy hands laid upon a holier head. In those days we went "out into the highways and hedges and compelled them to come in." That afternoon Jesse Lee preached in the market-house on Howard's Hill, from John xvii. 3: "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." The Lord was there in a powerful manner. Several were converted. During this Conference I became acquainted with many choice spirits, both among the ministry and laity; among the rest, Dr. Thomas Coke. I not only had the pleasure of hearing the Doctor preach, and make motions and speeches in the Conference, but also of dining with him and Bishop Asbury. The Doctor was a short man, and rather corpulent. He had a beautiful face, and it was full of expression, a sweet smile often playing over his features. His eyes were dark and his look very piercing. His voice was soft and full of melody, unless raised to a very high pitch, and then it was harsh, discordant, and squeaking. His conversational powers were great; he was very entertaining.\*

Jesse Lee felt aggrieved at a report which came to his ears after the election. If the cynical philosopher was right who divided mankind into two classes—those who *do* something, and those who find fault with what is done—it would not be hard to ascertain the class to which our Virginian belonged. He had *done* too much to escape the censure and envy of some who swell the ranks of the other class. The report was this: "That Bishop Asbury said that Brother Lee had imposed himself on him and on the Connection for eighteen months past, and he would have got rid of him long ago if he could." He went promptly to the Bishop, who as promptly denied the charge, and renewed his request urgently for the continuance of Lee's services; for he felt that he and "Brother Whatcoat would be unequal to the demands of the enlarged Connection." Lee concludes his account: "So we went into Conference, and he spoke to the subject, and denied the charge, and said he was thankful for my past services, and did wish for them in the Conferences in future. We traced the report until we fixed it on T—— L——, and he did not clear himself." †

The trend of opinion is indicated not only in what is done, but in what fails to be done, by a legislative body. Here are a few items of the latter kind:

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\* Reminiscences of Rev. Henry Boehm. † This T—— L—— afterward took "orders" in another Church.

Brother Wells moved that the new bishop, in stationing the preachers, be aided by a committee of not less than three nor more than four preachers, chosen by the Conference. Voted out, next day.

Brother Tolleson's motion for a delegated General Conference was called up, and lost by a great majority.

Brother Ormond moved "that the Yearly Conferences be authorized to nominate and elect their own presiding elders." This was voted out.

Ormond was a North Carolinian by birth, and enjoys the rare distinction of a Southern radical; for after being negatived on one of the questions' that persistently disturbed the Church's peace, he brought forward the other in characteristic style:

And whereas it is further observed that the rule now existing among us prevents our members increasing the number of their slaves by purchase, and tolerates an increase of number by birth, which children are often given to the enemies of the Methodists. My mind being seriously impressed with these and several other considerations, I move that this General Conference take the momentous subject of slavery into consideration, and make such alterations in the old rule as may be thought proper.

The momentous subject was taken up a few days afterward:

Brother Snethen moved that this General Conference do resolve that from this time forth no slave-holder shall be admitted into the Methodist Episcopal Church. Negatived.

Brother Bloodgood moved that all negro children belonging to the members of the Methodist Society, who shall be born in slavery after the fourth day of July, 1800, shall be emancipated: males at — years, and females at — years. Negatived.\*

One of the features of the General Conference of 1800 was the religious interest which attended it. "I believe," writes Lee, "we never had so good a General Conference before; we had the greatest speaking and the greatest union of affections that we ever had on a like occasion. The revival of religion which took place in Baltimore, during the Conference, began particularly in Old Town, where the people held meetings in a private house, and some of the preachers attended them in the afternoon of each day. Several were converted. The work then began to spread, and souls were converted in the different meeting-houses, and in different private houses, both by day and by night. The old Christians were wonderfully stirred up to cry to God more earnestly, and the preachers that tarried in town for a few days were all on fire of love. Such a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord had not been felt in that town for some

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\*See Journal of General Conference.



years." Asbury says: "The unction that attended the word **was** great; more than one hundred souls, at different times and places, professed conversion during the sitting of Conference. I was weary, but sat very close in Conference. My health is better than when we began." Bishop Whatcoat tells the story: "We had a most blessed time, and much preaching, fervent prayers, and strong exhortations through the city; while the high praises of a gracious God reverberated from street to street and from house to house. It was thought that not less than two hundred were converted during the Conference."

The revival at the Philadelphia Conference, which began its session at Duck Creek, in June, was one of the most remarkable that has taken place in the Church's history. Preaching and prayer-meeting and love-feast occupied the church, while the Conference met in a private dwelling. One who was present says: "Meetings were held day and night with rarely any intermission. One meeting in the church continued forty-five hours without cessation. Many were converted in private houses, and at family prayer, as well as in the house of the Lord. This revival did immense good; the preachers returned to their work like flames of fire."

This was a good beginning for the new bishop, and a renewing of strength to his senior. They completed the round of Annual Conferences, and then turned their faces to the West, and took Wm. McKendree with them, to be left there in charge of that field, known as the Western Conference, which included the Valley of the Mississippi.

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